



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



9149/08 (Presse 120)

PRESS RELEASE

2868th Council meeting

Education, Youth and Culture

Brussels, 21-22 May 2008

President **Milan ZVER**
Minister of Education and Sport of Slovenia
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Main results of the Council

The Council adopted conclusions on:

- *a European approach to **media literacy** in the digital environment;*
- ***intercultural competences**, in the context of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue;*
- *the **Work Plan for Culture 2008 - 2010**;*
- ***multilingualism**;*
- ***adult learning**;*
- *promoting **creativity and innovation** through education and training.*

*The Council held an exchange of views on promoting **creative content in the online environment**. It also held an exchange of views on the participation of **young people with fewer opportunities** and adopted a resolution on this issue.*

*In addition, the Council reached a general approach on a decision establishing a multi-annual Community programme on **protecting children using the internet** and on a decision designating **2009** as the **European year of creativity and innovation**.*

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- Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
- Documents for which references are given in the text are available on the Council's Internet site (<http://www.consilium.europa.eu>).
- Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the Council's Internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

TRANSPORT

- Agreement on air services with Pakistan50

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PARTICIPANTS

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

Belgium:

Ms Isabelle WEYKMANS

Minister for Culture and the Media, the Protection of Monuments, Youth and Sport (German-speaking Community)

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Mr Geert BOURGEOIS

Minister of Education (French Community)
Flemish Minister for Administrative Affairs, Foreign Policy, Media and Tourism

Bulgaria:

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Deputy Permanent Representative

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Mr Jaromír TALÍŘ

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Mr Brian MIKKELSEN

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Mr David CALATAYUD

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Minister for National Education

Ms Christine ALBANEL

Minister for Culture and Communication

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Minister of State with responsibility for Sports, Youth and the Voluntary Sector

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Minister for Culture

State Secretary for Education, attached to the Minister for
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Mr Anton ANTON

Mr Marius HIRTE

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Mr Vasko SIMONITI

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Minister for Culture

State Secretary at the Ministry of Higher Education,
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Mr Jozef HABÁNIK

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Mr Stefan WALLIN

Minister for Education

Minister for Culture and Sport

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Mr Jan BJÖRKLUND

Mr Christer HALLERBY

Minister for Culture

Minister for Education

State Secretary to the Minister for Integration and Equal
Opportunities

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Mr Bill RAMMELL

Mr Rhodry Glyn THOMAS
Mr Andy LEBRECHT

Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and
Higher Education
Minister for Heritage (Welsh Assembly)
Deputy Permanent Representative

.....

Commission:

Ms Viviane REDING
Mr Ján FIGEL

Member
Member

.....

ITEMS DEBATED**AUDIOVISUAL****Media literacy in the digital environment - *Council conclusions***

The Council adopted the following conclusions on a European approach to media literacy in the digital environment:

"The Council of the European Union,

Considering that:

- the new Audiovisual Media Services Directive calls for the "development of media literacy in all sections of society" and for close monitoring of progress in media literacy. It sets out a reporting obligation for the Commission to measure levels of media literacy in all the Member States¹. Criteria for the assessment of levels of media literacy are therefore needed;
- the European Parliament has asked the Council and the Commission "to develop and to implement media literacy programmes to promote active and aware citizenship in Europe"²;
- the crucial importance of media literacy has also been highlighted by UNESCO, for instance in the "Grünwald Declaration on Media Education" (1982) and in the Paris Agenda - twelve recommendations for media education (2007) and by the Council of Europe in its "Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member states on empowering children in the new information and communications environment" (2006);
- the Commission has undertaken a public consultation on media literacy³ and a study on "Current trends and approaches to media literacy in Europe"⁴;
- the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning (2006) identifies the knowledge, skills and attitudes related to digital competence;

¹ Article 26: the Commission shall submit "a report on the application of this Directive and, if necessary, make further proposals to adapt it to developments in the field of audiovisual media services, in particular in the light of recent technological developments, the competitiveness of the sector and levels of media literacy in all Member States".

² Resolution of 6 September 2005, on the "Television without Frontiers" Directive (89/552/EEC).

³ See Report on the results on the public consultation on Media Literacy:
http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/media_literacy/docs/report_on_ml_2007.pdf

⁴ See: http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/media_literacy/index_en.htm

- the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 December 2006 on the protection of minors and human dignity and on the right of reply in relation to the competitiveness of the European audiovisual and on-line information services industry (2006) already contains a series of possible measures for promoting media literacy.

(1) Welcomes

- the Commission Communication on "A European approach to media literacy in the digital environment" as a further building block to European audiovisual policy.

(2) Endorses

- the strategic view proposed by the European Commission of media literacy as an important factor for active citizenship in today's information society which can contribute towards achieving the objectives of the Lisbon agenda.

(3) Recognises

- the importance of media literacy and its role to promote citizens' active participation in the economic, cultural and democratic life of society;
- that media literacy, particularly the capacity to critically evaluate content, largely conditions users' confidence in digital technologies and media, and therefore the take-up of ICT and media, which are defined as a priority in the "i2010" strategic policy framework;
- the importance of media-literate users for media pluralism and the quality of content;
- the variety of efforts ongoing in Member States to improve and promote media literacy even if there are differences in practices and levels between Member States;
- the lack of common criteria and indicators for measuring media literacy;
- the importance of identifying and promoting good practices for the development of media literacy;
- the importance of education and training in the development of greater media literacy and the consequent need to improve teacher training and raise awareness among educators at all levels of education and training.

(4) Underlines

- the relevance of European programmes and initiatives such as the MEDIA 2007 Programme, the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013 and the Safer Internet Plus Programme;
- that future work should be based on these and related initiatives, towards the goal of achieving more awareness of the importance of media literacy among citizens;
- the need for regular exchange of information, best practices and, in the field of education, pedagogical methods between Member States.

(5) Takes note

- of the Commission's intention to carry out a further study with the aim of developing criteria and indicators to measure media literacy levels, taking due account of all relevant work ongoing within other international organisations;
- of the Commission's intention to continue to promote the development and exchange of good practices on media literacy in the digital environment.

(6) Invites the Commission

- to monitor developments in this area closely and keep under review the need for a further policy response at European level;
- to use the Contact Committee, established under the Audiovisual Media Services Directive, in an appropriate composition, as a forum for the exchange of information and best practices on media literacy and the provision of input to the development of the policy agenda in this area. Experts from the private sector and other stakeholders should be invited to contribute to this work.

(7) Invites the Member States to

- encourage the appropriate authorities, for example those in charge of audiovisual and electronic communication regulation, to cooperate and to promote the improvement of media literacy;
- promote and facilitate the development and implementation of codes of conduct and other co-regulatory and self-regulatory initiatives in conjunction with all interested parties at national level;
- encourage all stakeholders, in particular within the media and ICT sector, to carry out their own regular research into and observation of the different aspects and dimensions of media literacy;
- promote awareness-raising initiatives including those focusing specifically on the use of ICTs that are directed to young people and their parents and involve youth organisations as well as the media;
- promote media literacy in the framework of their lifelong learning strategies and encourage peer learning and the exchange of good practices between teaching professionals on this aspect of education."

Protecting children using the internet

The Council agreed to the general approach on a decision establishing a multi-annual Community programme on protecting children using the internet and other communication technologies ([9137/08](#)). The first reading opinion of the European Parliament is still pending. The Commission made a statement clarifying that, whilst welcoming the general approach, it was not able to amend its proposal formally at this early stage of the procedure.

The proposed programme is a successor to the Safer Internet Plus programme - which expires at the end of this year - that seeks to fund EU level initiatives of real added value in the fight against illegal content and harmful conduct online. The Commission submitted its proposal in February 2008 ([7241/08](#)).

The new programme will build on and continue the work of the existing programme with small adjustments and updates to the various action lines. Compared to the Commission's proposal, the text approved by Ministers contains the provision that projects above EUR 500 000 will be assessed under the comitology procedure (involvement of Member States and the Commission).

The draft programme is aimed at promoting safer use of the internet and other communication technologies, particularly for children, and fighting against illegal content and harmful conduct online. It will focus on practical help for the end-user, particularly children, parents, carers and educators, by encouraging multi-stakeholder partnerships. The programme will be implemented through four general action lines:

- ensuring public awareness;
- fighting against illegal content and tackling harmful conduct online;
- promoting a safer online environment;
- establishing a knowledge base.

The programme will cover a period of five years from 1 January 2009. Its budget is set at EUR 55 million.

The European Parliament is expected to adopt its first reading opinion in October 2008.

Creative content online

The Council held an exchange of views on promoting creative content in the online environment.

The President summarised the debate in the following way:

"The Council has held a thorough and wide-ranging debate on this matter. Member States drew particular attention to a number of important aspects of policy affecting the promotion of creative content online. These included the need to maintain cultural diversity and the problem of media concentration in the online world.

The Council heard a number of examples of good practice including:

- the development of agreements at national level reconciling the interests of consumers and those of content creators and providers; and
- the offering of publicly financed content online.

It was suggested that some problems, such as piracy, also need to be reflected upon at EU level, with delegations particularly referring to the need for positive prevention measures and the question of orphan works. There is also a need to reflect on the management of multi-territory licences, looking particularly at the risk of creating monopolies. At the same time it would be wise to avoid premature regulatory initiatives which could hinder the development of new business models.

The Commission was invited to take into account the views expressed by delegations with regard to its future activities and initiatives."

The Commission carried out a public consultation on this issue in July 2006 and adopted in January 2008, as a follow-up, a communication on creative content online in the single market ([5279/08](#)), which addresses a first set of challenges central to the uptake of online content services in Europe. The Commission has also announced its intention to issue a recommendation on certain aspects of this policy area.

CULTURE

Intercultural competences - *Council conclusions*

The Council adopted the following conclusions on intercultural competences in the context of the current European Year of Intercultural Dialogue:

"The Council of the European Union,

Referring to the provisions of Decision 1983/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008¹,

Referring to the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions,

Having regard to the Commission's Communication of 10 May 2007 on a European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World² and to the Council Resolution of 16 November 2007 on a European Agenda for Culture³,

Recalling the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning⁴,

Recalling the Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 15 November 2007, on improving the quality of teacher education,

CONSIDERING that:

- intercultural dialogue is a key tool in addressing some of the most important challenges Europe is facing at present and that it constitutes one of the three strategic objectives of the European Agenda for Culture, to be implemented through triennial work plans;
- in order to foster open and inclusive societies established on core European values and to promote active citizenship, European citizens need to be equipped with intercultural competences, which constitute a key factor for strengthening intercultural dialogue;

¹ OJ L 412, 30.12.2006, p. 44.

² 9496/07 + ADD 1.

³ OJ C 287, 29.11.2007, p. 1.

⁴ OJ L 394, 30.12.2006, p. 10.

- the knowledge, skills and attitudes of particular relevance to intercultural competences are those relating to the following key competences: communication in foreign languages, social and civic competences, and cultural awareness and expression¹;

RECOGNISING that

With a view to strengthening intercultural competences in society, a sustainable and cross-sectoral approach towards intercultural dialogue needs to be developed. This approach should seek to integrate and support the following relevant initiatives in the fields of:

CULTURE, in particular as foreseen in the Work Plan of the Council for the period 2008-2010:

- the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue as a means to foster open and inclusive societies;
- the promotion of everyone's active participation in cultural life and access to culture and heritage in all their diversity, with particular attention to people who have less opportunities for access;
- the improvement of the conditions for mobility of artists and works of art;
- the supporting of cooperation between culture and both formal education and training and informal and non-formal learning in the field of cultural awareness and artistic education;
- the fostering of linguistic competences and of translation to facilitate access to artistic expressions in different languages;

EDUCATION:

- the development of a lifelong learning perspective which includes the acquisition by all citizens of the key competences most relevant to intercultural competences and most likely to foster an appreciation of cultural diversity as a core value, such as linguistic, social and civic competences and cultural awareness and expression;

¹ Key competences as defined in the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 (OJ L 394, 30.12.2006, p.10).

- the development of policies based on equity principles aimed at integrating children from a diverse range of social and cultural backgrounds into mainstream forms of education and training, without any discrimination;
- within the framework of a coherent policy for multilingualism, the active promotion of language learning by encouraging the provision of a wide variety of opportunities, including the use of ICT and distance learning, to learn languages in formal, non-formal and informal environments;
- the encouragement of mobility schemes among learners, teachers and other teaching staff as an effective tool for the promotion of intercultural dialogue;
- the career-long development of skills that will enable teachers to better manage cultural diversity and facilitate the development of intercultural competences, and thereby contribute effectively to the establishment of inclusive learning communities;

YOUTH:

- the engagement of young people as a resource for contributing to intercultural dialogue in open and pluralistic societies;
- the promotion, development and recognition of intercultural competences of young people through non-formal and informal learning;
- the development of opportunities for young people for acquiring intercultural competences as early in life as possible through various forms of active participation in society, including voluntary activities, and through greater mobility as a way to experience the diversity of cultures and multilingualism;
- the promotion of access to and the role of culture, arts, music and sport in shaping young people's identities and bringing them together;

- the promotion, development and recognition of intercultural competences of youth workers and youth leaders by facilitating their mobility and their educational and training opportunities;
- the promotion of the role of organised civil society, particularly the involvement of youth organisations;

AUDIOVISUAL:

- the encouragement of media literacy, in line with the Commission Communication of 20 December 2007 "A European approach to media literacy in the digital environment" and the Audiovisual Media Services Directive of 11 December 2007¹ which, inter alia, promotes cultural diversity, both for linear and non-linear services, so that individuals are better equipped:
 - to identify, access and appreciate content relating to or originating within different cultures; and
 - to use new technological tools (software and hardware) to create and distribute their own cultural content;
- the promotion of media and audiovisual content that is culturally rich, diverse, and informative for all individuals by means of, inter alia;
 - encouraging co-productions at European, national and regional levels;
 - encouraging non-profit civil society-based media² to better take advantage of the opportunities provided by digital technologies;
- fostering the process of digitalisation of cultural materials and content to enable new media - online as well as mobile services - to contribute to enhanced accessibility of cultural diversity.

¹ OJ L 332, 18.12.2007, p. 27.

² Often referred to in English as "community media" and in French as "médias associatifs".

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION, WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE FIELDS OF COMPETENCES, TO

- promote intercultural competences through the existing instruments and initiatives in the fields of culture, education, youth and audiovisual policy, in particular by exploring how these measures could be further deepened and enhanced in support of intercultural dialogue;
- increase synergies between these fields with a view to developing intercultural competences, for example by envisaging joint initiatives, taking into account the need of citizens to understand and respect their own culture, the culture of others and cultural diversity in general, to communicate in a culturally diverse environment and to identify and actively participate in fostering and developing common values of democracy and fundamental rights;
- create opportunities for dialogue at local, regional, national and EU levels by strengthening support for the development of intercultural competences through the existing programmes in the fields of culture, education, youth and audiovisual policy;
- foster a favourable environment for creativity and innovation to make their full contribution in shaping intercultural competences and enhancing intercultural dialogue;
- identify and share good practices in the development of intercultural competences, taking account in particular, as a follow-up, of initiatives undertaken at national and EU level as part of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue;
- enhance and promote the concept of intercultural dialogue in all other relevant policy fields, both within the EU and in their external relations."

Work Plan for Culture 2008 - 2010 - *Council conclusions*

The Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, adopted conclusions on the Work Plan for Culture 2008 - 2010. The full text of the conclusions can be found in a document [9018/08](#).

EDUCATION**Multilingualism - Council conclusions**

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council of the European Union,

HAVING REGARD to:

1. the conclusions of the Lisbon European Council of 23 and 24 March 2000, which included foreign languages within a European framework for the definition of basic skills to be provided through lifelong learning¹;
2. Article 22 of the Charter of fundamental rights of the European Union, which recognises the principle that the Union shall respect cultural, religious and linguistic diversity²;
3. the conclusions of the Barcelona European Council of 15 and 16 March 2002, which called for further action to improve the mastery of basic skills, in particular by teaching two foreign languages to all from a very early age³;
4. the Commission communication of 24 July 2003 "Promoting Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity: an Action Plan 2004-2006"⁴, and the subsequent Commission report of 25 September 2007 on the implementation of that Action Plan⁵ ";
5. Decision No. 2241/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2004 on a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass)⁶;
6. the Commission communication of 22 November 2005 "A new Framework Strategy for Multilingualism", which encompasses both internal and external action on the promotion of languages and communication with the citizens⁷;

¹ SN 100/00, paragraph 26, p.9.

² OJ C 364, 18.12.2000, p. 13.

³ SN 100/02, paragraph 44, p.19.

⁴ Doc. 11834/03

⁵ Doc. 13346/07

⁶ OJ L 390, 31.12.2004, p.6.

⁷ Doc. 14908/05.

7. the Council conclusions of 19 May 2006 on the European Indicator of Language Competence¹, which reaffirmed 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;
8. the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning², one of which is communication in foreign languages;
9. the Resolution of the Council of 16 November 2007 on a European Agenda for Culture³, which sets multilingualism as one of the priority areas for action to promote cultural heritage,

and in the light of the discussions during the Ministerial Conference on Multilingualism held on 15 February 2008,

CONSIDERS that

- linguistic and cultural diversity are distinctive features in the daily lives of an increasing number of European citizens and companies as a result of increased mobility, migration and globalisation;
- linguistic competences are a desirable life-skill for all EU citizens, enabling them to enjoy the economic, social and cultural benefits of free movement within the Union;
- successive reports and recommendations by various stakeholder groups have shown that insufficient account is still taken of language needs in European society;
- the importance attached to multilingualism and other language policy issues in the context of common EU policies imposes the need to pay these matters the attention they deserve, as well as the need for the European institutions to re-emphasise their long-standing commitment to the promotion of language learning and linguistic diversity.

¹ OJ C 172, 25.7.2006, p. 1.

² OJ L 394, 30.12.2006, pp.10-18.

³ OJ C 287 of 29.11.2007, p. 1.

AFFIRMS that

1. Multilingualism policy encompasses the economic, social and cultural aspects of languages in a lifelong learning perspective.
2. The linguistic diversity of Europe should be preserved and parity between languages fully respected. The European Union institutions should play a key role in pursuing these objectives.
3. As well as contributing to personal and cultural enrichment, a knowledge of languages is one of the basic skills European citizens need to acquire in order to play an active part in the European knowledge society, and one that both promotes mobility and facilitates social integration and cohesion.
4. Since language needs may vary according to each individual's interests, work and cultural background, the broadest possible range of languages should be available to learners, with the support of new technologies, innovative approaches and networking between educational providers.
5. With a view to promoting economic growth and competitiveness, it is important for Europe also to maintain a sufficient knowledge base in non-European languages with a global reach. At the same time, efforts should be made to uphold the position of European languages on the international stage.
6. Quality teaching is essential for successful learning at any age and efforts should therefore be made to ensure that language teachers have a solid command of the language they teach, have access to high quality initial and continuous training and possess the necessary intercultural skills. As part of language teacher training, exchange programmes between Member States should be actively encouraged and supported.
7. To help them integrate successfully, sufficient support should be provided to migrants to enable them to learn the language(s) of the host country, while members of the host communities should be encouraged to show an interest in the cultures of newcomers.
8. Linguistic and cultural competences lie at the heart of education. Proficiency in the first language may facilitate the learning of other languages, while early language learning, bilingual education and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) are effective means of improving language learning provision.

9. Quality interpretation and translation is needed to ensure efficient communication between speakers of different languages, while greater attention should be paid to linguistic considerations in the marketing and distribution of goods and services, in particular audiovisual media services.

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE COMMISSION, TO:

1. Work together to enhance European cooperation on multilingualism and - in consultation with the relevant stakeholders - pursue the above-mentioned policy orientations, making use as appropriate of the open method of coordination to facilitate the exchange of experience and good practice.
2. Take appropriate steps to improve effective language teaching and continuity for language learning in a lifelong learning perspective, including by making existing resources and infrastructure more widely available, accessible and attractive to all, developing resources and increasing the diversity of languages offered.
3. Promote the learning of their national languages in other Member States, including through greater use of distance learning technologies, and encourage the learning of less widely used EU languages, and non-European languages.
4. Use existing tools to confirm language knowledge, such as the Council of Europe's European Language Portfolio and the Europass Language Portfolio.
5. Encourage measures to facilitate language learning by people with special needs, as a means of contributing to their social inclusion, better career opportunities and welfare.
6. Cooperate with international organisations working on issues relating to multilingualism, in particular the Council of Europe and UNESCO.

INVITES THE COMMISSION TO:

1. Support the Member States in their efforts to pursue the above priorities.
2. Draw up proposals by the end of 2008 for a comprehensive policy framework on multilingualism, which takes due account of the linguistic needs of citizens and institutions, including by respecting their right to communicate with the institutions of the European Union in any one of its official languages."

Adult learning - Council conclusions

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council of the European Union,

WHEREAS

1. The Spring 2000 Lisbon European Council conclusions¹ called for Europe's education and training systems to be modernised in response to the demands of a knowledge-based economy and the increasing socio-economic and demographic challenges confronting the Union in a globalised world.
2. The Spring 2002 Barcelona European Council conclusions² urged Member States to ensure that all citizens are equipped with basic qualifications, as well as to increase opportunities for older workers to remain in the labour market, in particular by guaranteeing real access to lifelong learning.
3. The Council Resolution of 27 June 2002 on lifelong learning³ stressed that lifelong learning must cover learning from the pre-school age to that of post-retirement, including the entire spectrum of formal, non-formal and informal learning.
4. The Council Resolution of 19 December 2002 on enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training⁴ noted that the adaptability and employability of adults, including older workers, depend strongly on opportunities to update and acquire new skills throughout working life.
5. The Council Resolution of 28 May 2004 on strengthening policies, systems and practices in the field of guidance⁵ stressed that all European citizens should have access to guidance services at all life stages, paying particular attention to individuals and groups at risk.
6. The Council conclusions of 28 May 2004 on common European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning⁶, as established in response to the November 2002 Copenhagen Declaration, called for the development and dissemination of European instruments to recognise non-formal and informal learning

¹ SN 100/00.

² SN 100/02, paragraphs 32 and 33.

³ OJ C 163, 9.7.2002, p.2.

⁴ OJ C 13, 18.1.2003, p.2.

⁵ 9286/04.

⁶ 9600/04.

7. The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning¹ is aimed inter alia at ensuring that adults are able to develop and update their skills throughout their lives and that appropriate infrastructure is in place for the continuing education and training of adults.
8. The Council conclusions of 25 May 2007 on a coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks in education and training² called for the development of indicators on adult skills to be pursued.
9. The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of a European Qualifications Framework³ promotes an approach to the description of qualifications based on learning outcomes, regardless of how or where these are achieved.
10. The 2008 joint progress report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the "Education and Training 2010" work programme stresses that the low level of participation in adult learning of older workers and the low-skilled remains a major problem.
11. The European Parliament Resolution of 16 January 2008 on adult learning : It is never too late to learn⁴ urges Member States to promote the acquisition of knowledge and to develop a culture of lifelong learning, notably by implementing gender equal policies designed to make adult education more attractive, more accessible and more effective.

WELCOMES the October 2006 Commission communication *It is never too late to learn*⁵ and the September 2007 Commission Action Plan *It is always a good time to learn*⁶, both of which highlight the importance of adult learning as a key component of lifelong learning and call on Member States to remove barriers to participation, to increase overall quality and efficiency in adult learning, to speed up the process of validation and recognition and to ensure sufficient investment in and monitoring of the field.

¹ OJ L 394, 30.12.2006, p.11.

² OJ C 311, 21.12.2007, p.15.

³ *OJ reference to be supplied.*

⁴ (2007/2114 (INI)) - P6_TA-PROV(2008)0013.

⁵ 14600/06 - COM(2006) 614 final.

⁶ 13426/07 - COM(2007) 558 final.

RECOGNISES the key role which adult learning can play in meeting the goals of the Lisbon Strategy, by fostering social cohesion, providing citizens with the skills required to find new jobs and helping Europe to better respond to the challenges of globalisation. In particular, there is a need to:

1. Raise the skills levels of a still significant number of low-skilled workers, with a view to enabling all citizens to adapt to technological change and future skills needs and thereby contributing to improving overall economic performance.
2. Address the problem of the persistently high number of early school leavers by offering a second chance to those who enter adult age without a qualification, focusing on areas of particular concern, such as basic literacy and numeracy, IT skills and language learning.
3. Combat social exclusion due to circumstances such as low levels of initial education, unemployment and rural isolation, whilst paying more attention - in the face of current demographic and migration trends - to the lifelong learning and training requirements of older workers and migrants.
4. Ensure the efficiency, effectiveness and quality of adult learning, with the aim of increasing active participation in such learning, especially among disadvantaged groups, of attracting sufficient public and private investment to this area, and of encouraging the private sector to consider such learning as a key component of workplace and business development.

CONSIDERS that adult learning can make an important contribution to meeting such needs by providing not only economic and social benefits, such as greater employability, access to better-quality jobs, more responsible citizenship and increased civic participation, but also individual benefits such as greater self-fulfilment, improved health and well-being and enhanced self-esteem, and accordingly that:

1. Adult learning should be given stronger emphasis and more effective support at national level, as part of overall efforts to develop a culture of lifelong learning.
2. The specific measures detailed in the Annex to these conclusions could form a coherent framework for future action in this field within the "Education and Training 2010" work programme.

3. Further development and implementation of such measures should fully respect the responsibility of Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education and training systems, and should use the open method of coordination.
4. Progress and monitoring of adult learning should be consistent with the coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks adopted by the Council in May 2007 and be included in future joint progress reports on the "Education and Training" work programme.
5. The cross-sectoral nature, diversity, complexity and richness of adult learning impose the need for an integrated approach involving all stakeholders, including those at local and regional level, the social partners and NGOs.

Accordingly INVITES THE MEMBERS STATES to address the issues relating to adult learning identified in these conclusions, in particular by implementing the measures outlined in the Annex hereto in accordance with the specific context and priorities of the Member States,

and INVITES THE COMMISSION to:

- Support Member States in further developing and improving adult learning in terms not only of increased opportunities, broader access and greater participation, but also of more relevant, results-oriented learning outcomes, using measures such as those outlined in the Annex to these conclusions;
- Ensure complementarity and coherence between the follow-up given to any such measures and implementation of the Bologna and Copenhagen processes, insofar as these relate to adult learners;
- Strengthen and use existing research structures for the needs of adult education;

- Pursue and intensify cooperation with the international organisations and relevant non-governmental bodies working in this field, as well as establish links with regional initiatives such as Europe-Asia cooperation and worldwide initiatives such as "Education for All" and the Millennium Development Goals.

ANNEX

SPECIFIC MEASURES FOR THE PERIOD 2008-2010

A. BY THE COMMISSION, WITH THE COOPERATION OF THE MEMBER STATES :

Analyse reforms in education and training at national level, especially the development of national qualifications systems in relation to the European Qualifications Framework and credit transfer systems relating to both formal, non-formal and informal learning, with a view to improving adult access to qualifications systems.

Analyse the impact of national education and training reforms in terms of the distribution of funding resources across the various age groups, in line with a lifelong learning approach.

Support the development of career opportunities, conditions and resources - based on existing good practice in the Member States - for those working in the field of adult learning, in order to enhance the visibility and status of the profession.

Carry out further research on the development of quality criteria for adult learning providers.

Draw up a common inventory of good practice and projects aimed at motivating those groups which are particularly hard to reach, identifying key factors for their reintegration into the labour market and society, and enhancing their self-esteem.

Identify good practice in the assessment of learning outcomes, particularly those of low-skilled and older workers and of migrants acquired mainly outside the formal learning system.

Produce a glossary of agreed definitions used in adult learning and, drawing on existing data collections, including those of the OECD, and remaining consistent with the 2008 Regulation on statistics on education and lifelong learning¹, establish a set of European level comparable core data required to facilitate monitoring. (The right of participation of all Member States in this work should be ensured)

Support measures to strengthen the place of adult learning within the context of national lifelong learning strategies.

Support campaigns aimed at raising awareness and motivation among potential learners and thereby increasing overall participation in adult learning.

B. BY THE MEMBER STATES, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE COMMISSION :

1. Promote and support the exchange of good practice, mutual learning and the development of joint projects in the adult education field between stakeholders in the Member States.
2. As part of the drive towards developing a culture of lifelong learning, closely cooperate in identifying and removing barriers to adult learning, and in establishing demand-driven, high quality provision and facilities for the adult learning field, including e-learning and distance learning opportunities.
3. Encourage both higher education and vocational education institutions to reach out more to adult learners, as well as develop partnerships with the business community in order to motivate employers to organise, and employees to engage in, adult learning in the workplace.
4. Work towards the objective of facilitating access to and increasing participation in adult learning by all citizens, in particular those who leave initial education and training early and would like a "second chance", those with special needs and those with insufficient basic skills or low educational achievements, with the aim of encouraging them to upgrade their qualifications.
5. Ensure effective and efficient use of the Lifelong Learning Programme, the European Structural Funds and other similar sources of funding, in order to improve the delivery of learning opportunities for adults.

¹ Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 concerning the production and development of statistics on education and lifelong learning - PE-CONS 3659/3/07 REV 3 / OJ reference to be supplied.

6. Promote the development and use of lifelong guidance systems which can provide adults with independent information and advice, individual skills analysis and personalised careers guidance.
7. Consider - from a cost/benefit point of view - the contribution of adult learning to social cohesion and economic development.
8. Facilitate the development of methodologies and tools needed to assess key skills and competencies - including those acquired mainly outside the formal learning system - and have them validated and defined in terms of learning outcomes, whilst investing in the promotion of validation and recognition procedures.
9. Endeavour to ensure an adequate share for adult learning when allocating financial resources across the various educational sectors, in line with a lifelong learning approach.
10. Promote the active involvement of the social partners and other stakeholders, including NGOs, in securing high quality learning provision tailored to the needs of the various categories of learners. Special emphasis should be placed on ICT learning approaches and the development of ICT skills.
11. Reinforce cooperation with CEDEFOP and the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, as well as make full use of the research capacities of other international institutions, in the area of adult education and learning.
12. Based on the results obtained after implementation of these measures, consider further possible action beyond 2010 in accordance with the follow up to the "Education and Training 2010" work programme."

European year of creativity and innovation 2009

The Council reached a general approach on a draft Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council designating 2009 as the European year of creativity and innovation ([8935/08](#)). The first reading opinion of the European Parliament is still pending.

Declaring a European year of creativity and innovation will be an effective way of helping to meet the challenges facing Europe by raising public awareness, disseminating information about good practices and promoting research and policy debate.

The objective of the European year will be to promote creativity through lifelong learning, as a driver for innovation and as a key factor for the development of personal, entrepreneurial and social competences and the wellbeing of all individuals in the society.

The activities within the framework of the European year will be financed from the existing programmes in the field of education and training, in particular from the Lifelong Learning Programme. However, given the subject matter, programmes and policies in other fields such as enterprise, cohesion, research and the information society could support this initiative.

The Commission submitted its proposal in March 2008 ([7755/08](#)). An agreement with the European Parliament at first reading would be desirable with a view to ensuring that preparations for the European year can begin in good time.

Promoting creativity and innovation through education and training - *Council conclusions*

Prior to the adoption of a set of conclusions on the subject, the Council held an exchange of views on promoting creativity and innovation through education and training. Ministers were invited to discuss any aspect of the draft Council conclusions, express their views on the draft decision concerning the European year of creativity and innovation or address any of the questions posed by the Presidency in [9207/08](#).

Among the points highlighted by Ministers were:

- the importance of promoting capacities linked to creativity such as curiosity, critical thinking, risk taking and problem solving, alongside the acquisition of knowledge and skills;
- the opportunities afforded by new technologies and their implications for the classroom;
- the crucial role played by teachers, who can contribute by developing innovative approaches and exemplifying creativity in their own teaching;
- the need for open schools working in partnership with parents, businesses and the community at large;
- the value, at EU level, of peer learning activities and the exchange of good practice between Member States.

Following the debate, the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, adopted the following conclusions:

"THE COUNCIL AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES, MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL,

RECALLING the political background to this issue as set out in the Annex to these conclusions, and in the light of the Conference on *Promoting Innovation and Creativity: Schools' Response to the Challenges of Future Societies* held in Brdo on 9-10 April 2008,

NOTE THAT

1. While Member States are fully responsible for the organisation and content of their education and training systems, promoting creativity and innovation is an area in which quality and efficiency at national and regional level could benefit from cooperation at European level.
2. The common European objectives of quality, access and openness to the wider world have been supported under the present "Education and Training 2010" work programme by the search for efficiency and equity. Since creativity and the capacity to innovate are also crucial to sustainable economic and social development in Europe, these issues deserve greater emphasis in the context of future European cooperation in the field of education.
3. All levels of education and training can contribute to creativity and innovation in a lifelong learning perspective: the early stages of education concentrating on motivation, learning to learn skills and other key competences, and subsequent stages focusing on more specific skills and the creation, development and application of new knowledge and ideas.

CONSIDER that

1. Creativity is the prime source of innovation, which in turn is acknowledged as the main driver of growth and wealth creation, as key to improvements in the social field and as an essential tool in addressing global challenges such as climate change, health care and sustainable development.
2. There is a growing need for action at national level as well as cooperation at EU level to bring about the more ambitious change necessary if schools are to prepare pupils adequately to face the significant challenges and problems of a fast-changing world.
3. Beyond their essential tasks of ensuring the acquisition of key competences and providing the knowledge triangle with a solid skills base, education and training systems can play a fundamental role in the development of creative and innovative capacities as key factors in enhancing future economic competitiveness and promoting social cohesion and individual wellbeing.

4. Starting at school level, education systems need to combine the development of specific knowledge and skills together with that of generic capacities linked to creativity, such as curiosity, intuition, critical and lateral thinking, problem solving, experimentation, risk taking and the ability to learn from failure, use of the imagination and hypothetical reasoning, and a sense of entrepreneurship.
5. The eight key competences for lifelong learning defined in 2006 EU Recommendation¹ relate to skills which are of particular relevance to creativity and the capacity to innovate. In particular, there is a need for skills and competences that enable people to embrace change as an opportunity, to remain receptive to new ideas and to respect and appreciate the values of others.
6. In the face of evidence that diversity and multicultural environments can stimulate creativity, inclusive education policies aimed at tolerance and mutual understanding have the potential to turn the increasing multiculturalism of European societies into an asset for creativity, innovation and growth.
7. The participation of schools in new and different networks, particularly those based in the local community, can help them to achieve their educational objectives, as well as contribute to the promotion of creativity and innovation. Partnerships between education, the working world and civil society in general are crucial for anticipating and adapting to the changing needs of professional and social life: traineeships, joint projects, peer learning and course instructors from outside education can introduce teachers and pupils to new ideas.
8. Teachers have a crucial role to play in nurturing and supporting each child's creative potential, and can contribute to this by exemplifying creativity in their own teaching.

In this regard, more personalised, learner-centred approaches to education tailored to the needs and abilities of different learners - including those with special talents - seem particularly conducive to creativity and, notwithstanding their implications in terms of resources and internal organisation, to increasing the motivation and confidence of more practically or artistically oriented learners.

¹ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (OJ L 394 / 30.12.2006).

9. Teacher education institutions also have a key contribution to make in providing teaching staff with the knowledge and competences required for change, such as the skills needed to promote learner-centred approaches, collaborative working methods and the use of modern learning tools, particularly those based on ICT. Fostering creative abilities and attitudes within schools also requires the support of an organisational culture open to creativity and the creation of an innovation-friendly environment in general, as well as committed and forward-looking leadership at all levels.
10. Since an increasing share of learning occurs at the workplace, in non-formal contexts and in leisure time - often through new ICT-based learning tools and methods - the development of creative and innovative capacities has relevance for all aspects of lifelong learning.
11. Greater research, supported by data sharing, is needed on methods for identifying, defining, measuring and recording learning outcomes in soft transversal skills such as creativity and innovative capacity. There is also a need to provide education policy makers with a stronger evidence base for the promotion of creative and innovative capacities through lifelong learning, and to explore the possible contribution which the EU could make to this process.

INVITE THE MEMBER STATES TO

1. Consider how to foster greater synergy between knowledge and skills on the one hand and creativity on the other, as well as how best to promote, monitor and assess creativity and innovative capacity, at all levels of education and training.
2. Encourage teachers to develop their professional role as learning facilitators and promoters of creativity, and help teacher education institutions to respond to the new demands of the teaching profession, for instance by promoting collaborative, learner-centred approaches, innovative learning environments and the use of open education resources.
3. Promote a learning culture through the development of broader learning communities, by facilitating and supporting networks and partnerships - involving civil society and other stakeholders - between education and related areas such as culture on the one hand, and the working world on the other.

INVITE THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION TO

1. Consider including the promotion of creativity and innovative capacity among the objectives for current and future European cooperation in the field of education and training as complementary to promoting and supporting the implementation of the 2006 Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning; and explore appropriate and effective means at European level - such as peer learning - to achieve those goals at all levels of education and training and in a lifelong learning perspective.
2. Promote cultural production, intercultural dialogue and cooperation at local, regional, national and international level with a view to developing environments especially conducive to creativity and innovation.
3. Create synergies to support the promotion of creativity and innovation through active cooperation with relevant international organisations, in particular the Council of Europe, UNESCO and the OECD, on topics such as intercultural education, democracy, tolerance and human rights. (The right of participation of all Member States in such work should be ensured).
4. Encourage and support the development, exchange and dissemination of good practice on evidence-based education policy relating to the promotion of creative and innovative skills in Europe.
5. Make appropriate use of EU programmes and instruments to promote and support creativity and innovative capacity at all stages of lifelong learning, as well as in the educational process itself.

AND INVITES THE COMMISSION TO

1. Support relevant research, and analyse and exchange data, at both EU level and among the Member States - in cooperation with European and international research institutions - on the promotion and development of creative and innovative skills through education and training.
2. In the process of designing a new strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training beyond 2010, continue efforts to raise the level of understanding on issues associated with the development of creative and innovative capacity through education and training within the overall context of a broad-based innovation policy for the EU.

Political background

- 1) The Education Council's report to the Spring 2001 European Council¹ and the subsequently adopted detailed work programme², which set a number of concrete future objectives for education and training systems in Europe, including *Developing skills for the knowledge society*, *Making learning more attractive* and *Strengthening the links with working life and research, and society at large*;
- 2) The conclusions of the Spring 2006 European Council, which stressed that reforms must be stepped up to ensure high quality education systems which are both efficient and equitable and acknowledged the crucial role of all levels of education and training in the search for excellence and innovation;³
- 3) The November 2006 Council conclusions on efficiency and equity in education and training, which stated that educational institutions should focus on the wider learning environment in order to promote and maintain efficiency, equity and general well-being;⁴
- 4) The December 2006 Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning, which highlighted the role of critical thinking, creativity, initiative, problem solving, risk assessment, decision taking, and constructive management of feelings in all eight key competences;⁵

¹ *The concrete future objectives of education and training systems* - Report from the Education Council to the European Council (doc. 5980/01).

² *Detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe*, generally referred to as the 'Education and Training 2010' work programme (OJ C 142, 14.6.2002).

³ Presidency conclusions, Brussels European Council, 23/24 March 2006 (doc. 7775/06).

⁴ Conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council of 14 November 2006, on efficiency and equity in education and training (OJ C 298, 8.12.2006).

⁵ Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (OJ L 394, 30.12.2006).

- 5) The December 2006 Council conclusions on the strategic priorities for innovation at EU level¹, which defined education as a pre-condition for innovation and stated that education must promote talent and creativity from an early age, and which were adopted in response to the Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions of 13 September 2006 - Putting knowledge into practice: A broad-based innovation strategy for the EU²;
- 6) The May 2007 Commission communication "A European agenda for culture in a globalizing world", which stated that the role of culture in supporting and fostering creativity and innovation must be explored and promoted and sees creativity as the basis of innovation;³
- 7) The Council conclusions of May 2007, on a coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks for monitoring progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training, which recognised that defining a coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks was a continuous and consultative process⁴;
- 8) The November 2007 Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on improving the quality of teacher education, which agreed to promote the acquisition of competences which will enable teachers to develop new knowledge and be innovative through engagement in reflective practice and research⁵;

¹ Council conclusions on 4 December 2006 on a Broad-based Innovation Strategy: Strategic Priorities for Innovation at EU Level (16253/06

² Doc. 12940/06.

³ Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions Brussels, 10 May 2007 - *A European agenda for culture in a globalizing world* (COM(2007) 242 final).

⁴ Council conclusions on a coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks for monitoring progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training, 24 May 2007, (OJ C 311, 21.12.2007);

⁵ Conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 15 November 2007, on improving the quality of teacher education (OJ C 300, 12.12.2007).

- 9) The 2008 joint progress report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the 'Education & Training 2010' work programme "Delivering lifelong learning for knowledge, creativity and innovation", which emphasised that research and innovation need a broad skills base in the population and that excellence and the key competences must be developed in all systems and levels of education and training ¹;
- 10) The key messages from the Education Council to the Spring 2008 European Council, which stated that education and training must both provide a broad knowledge and skills base in the population and develop learners' creativity and capacity for innovation, and that to this end curricula on all levels should be developed so as to enhance the creative and innovative competences of learners ²;
- 11) The conclusions of the Spring 2008 European Council, which considered the full development of the potential for innovation and creativity of European citizens built on European culture and excellence in science as a key factor for future growth ³;
- 12) The Commission Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the European Year of Creativity and Innovation (2009) ⁴."

¹ *"Delivering lifelong learning for knowledge, creativity and innovation" - 2008 joint progress report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the 'Education & Training 2010' work programme (5723/08).*

² Key messages of the Education Council to the Spring European Council in the fields of education/training and youth (6445/08).

³ Brussels European Council, 13/14 March 2008, Presidency Conclusions (7652/08).

⁴ Doc. 7755/08

YOUTH

Participation of young people with fewer opportunities - *Resolution*

The Council held an exchange of views on the participation of young people with fewer opportunities.

Ministers focused their interventions in particular on the following topics suggested by the Presidency:

- the experience in the respective Member States in encouraging the participation in society of young people with fewer opportunities;
- possible future policies and measures that could be developed to increase the participation in society of young people with fewer opportunities and their social inclusion at European and national level.

The ideas and suggestions presented by Member States during the exchange of views will be taken into consideration when formulating the objectives for future cooperation at EU level in the youth field.

Following the debate, the Council and the representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within 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 European Council adopted at its 2005 Spring Summit the European Pact for Youth as one of the instruments contributing to the implementation of the renewed Lisbon Strategy with a view to improving - by means of cross-sectoral strategies - young people's employment opportunities and social inclusion, their education, training and mobility, giving priority to young people with fewer opportunities;

- 2) in its Resolution of 7 December 2006¹, the Council suggested that Member States encourage the provision of wide-ranging and equal opportunities for all young people to participate in civic life and that a structured dialogue with young people should involve those engaged in various and innovative forms of active citizenship, non-organised young people and young people with fewer opportunities thus creating conditions for equal participation of all young people;
- 3) in its Resolution of 25 May 2007², the Council invited the Member States and the Commission to improve the coherence of measures to implement the European Pact for Youth and to make sure that "such measures actually reach their target groups, in particular young people with fewer opportunities, by taking into account their needs, backgrounds and motivation";
- 4) in its Communication of 5 September 2007 entitled Promoting young people's full participation in education, employment and society³ the Commission emphasised that it is in the social and economic interest of Europe that the full potential of all young people is used; reference was therefore made to the importance of achieving social inclusion and equal opportunities for all young people paying particular attention to those with fewer opportunities;
- 5) the Spring 2008 European Council emphasised the importance of strengthening the social dimension of the Lisbon Strategy, of combating poverty and social exclusion, of promoting active inclusion and increasing employment opportunities for those furthest from the labour market, including young people, and urged Member States to take concrete action in order to improve the achievement levels of learners with a migrant background and from disadvantaged groups.

NOTE THAT

- 1) work under the German Presidency focussed on equal opportunities and social participation for all children and youth within the framework of the team presidency programme on social and professional integration of young people;

¹ Resolution of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on implementing the common objectives for participation by and information for young people in view of promoting their active European citizenship (OJ C 297, 7.12.2006, p. 6).

² Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council: "Creating equal opportunities for all young people – full participation in society (doc. 8770/07 of 25 May 2007).

³ COM(2007) 498 final

- 2) the results of the peer-learning activities on the participation of young people with fewer opportunities have shown that such young people require special attention in all Member States and that it is particularly necessary that public authorities at local and regional level, civil society, youth workers, youth organisations and young people themselves work hand in hand to foster their well-being;
- 3) in the framework of the structured dialogue, young people and representatives of youth organisations met on 18-21 April 2008 on the occasion of the Slovenian Presidency's youth event and formulated a set of conclusions regarding the mobility, employment, non-formal learning and competence-building, integration and political participation of young people with fewer opportunities, and the role of young people in intercultural dialogue.

UNDERLINE THAT

- 1) while recognising the differences between Member States, the situation of young people with fewer opportunities (such as young women and men from less-privileged educational, socio-economic or geographical backgrounds, or with disabilities) is an issue of concern in many European countries;
- 2) despite contemporary globalisation and migratory flows that create new opportunities and enrich European diversity, a number of young people with fewer opportunities still face economic and social difficulties;
- 3) the very cohesion of our societies is endangered by the fact that a considerable number of young people in Europe lack opportunities to actively participate in education, employment and society; therefore, empowering every young person to fulfil his or her potential and to participate actively in community life is essential for the sound and sustainable development of societies and contributes to overall social cohesion by building mutually trusting relationships with other groups of society, including older generations;
- 4) unemployment, poverty, poor health, cultural, social and economic exclusion and all forms of discrimination are obstacles to the well-being of young people and may hinder their active participation in society;

- 5) tailored measures targeted to young people with fewer opportunities should be based on cross-disciplinary research on young people and their living conditions. Such a knowledge-based approach is particularly relevant when dealing with issues related to young people with fewer opportunities;
- 6) the transition and mobility between training and education systems and the labour market is of great importance for the prevention of unemployment and social exclusion of young people;
- 7) in the context of the Community cooperation framework in the field of education, tackling the problem of early school leavers and educational disadvantage is a major challenge; evidence shows that educational achievement in most Member States still depends on socio-economic background, and additional efforts and strategies are therefore necessary to address this structural inequality;
- 8) non-formal and informal learning has a key role to play as an instrument supporting the social and economic inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities; in this context, the work of youth workers and youth organisations with these youngsters is of particular importance;
- 9) at European level, the Youth in Action Programme is a key instrument for promoting the active participation and social inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities;
- 10) culture, youth work and sports activities play an important role in contributing to the inclusion and well-being of young people with fewer opportunities.

EMPHASISE IN PARTICULAR THAT

young people with fewer opportunities should be given special attention at an early stage, in order for them to be better integrated in society. They should also be offered every opportunity (through special support or mentoring) to take part in actions open to all young people.

INVITE THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION TO

- 1) give high priority to young people in the most vulnerable situations when implementing the objectives of the Lisbon Strategy and the European Youth Pact, and pay special attention to them in devising their national flexicurity strategies;

- 2) further develop the transversal approach to youth issues and the shaping of cross-sectoral policies, which is particularly relevant in respect of young people with fewer opportunities;
- 3) counteract gender stereotypes and promote gender equality in all actions taken to empower young people with fewer opportunities;
- 4) support young people in adopting a healthy lifestyle and include this specific target within their health policies, with a particular focus on young people with fewer opportunities;
- 5) act against the intergenerational transmission of unemployment and economic inactivity through, inter alia, initiatives aiming at creating good employment opportunities for young people;
- 6) reinforce as a priority the social inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities, in particular by promoting equal opportunities for children and young people in the context of the EU social protection and social inclusion process;
- 7) support the development of the existing forms of participation and encourage the creation of new ones that include young people with fewer opportunities and support the development of innovative and targeted measures to improve their access to ICT, media and information, especially at local and regional level, within the framework of the open method of coordination in the field of youth;
- 8) pay due attention to the participation of young people with fewer opportunities as such and also to the social benefit of this participation, while developing and assessing programmes targeted at young people;
- 9) work with youth organisations for developing an inclusive approach in the structured dialogue with young people with fewer opportunities at all levels, and adapt the format of encounters if necessary;
- 10) broaden awareness of and knowledge and expertise regarding the social, economic and other factors determining the well-being of young people and the situation of young people with fewer opportunities;

- 11) reinforce the dissemination of good practices at all levels via exchange of data, experiences and networking.

INVITE THE MEMBER STATES TO

- 1) facilitate the development of sustainable strategies or integrated measures in national policy plans aimed at improving the conditions for the involvement and inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities in society.
- 2) Particular considerations should be given to interdisciplinary and intersectoral early intervention measures to prevent or mitigate the risks of children and young people becoming socially excluded;
- 3) make available EU funding (EU programmes and Structural Funds) for supporting the social inclusion and active participation of young people with fewer opportunities;
- 4) provide increased support to youth workers and youth leaders working with young people with fewer opportunities, inter alia by enhancing further training and improving recognition of their skills;
- 5) encourage and support youth and social organisations in their actions on behalf of young people with fewer opportunities;
- 6) promote tailored information and facilitate access to such information for young people with fewer opportunities;
- 7) where appropriate, develop and improve mechanisms for vocational guidance and counselling to enable young people with fewer opportunities to find a job;
- 8) identify the obstacles in the way of participation by young people with fewer opportunities, seek ways to overcome these obstacles and encourage especially the participation of young people with fewer opportunities from the local level up to the national level both within representative democracy and in the youth structures; provide greater support for learning to participate.

INVITE THE COMMISSION TO

- 1) consider possible lines of action at European level, based on good practices identified in cooperation with Member States, to facilitate the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities and their participation in society;
- 2) take into account the objectives of the current Resolution when proposing the priorities for the future framework of cooperation in the field of youth."

In addition to calling for targeted action by all the parties concerned, the ambition of the resolution is to suggest that the topic of participation of young people with fewer opportunities should be considered as one of the central themes for the cooperation framework in the youth field beyond 2009.

EVENTS IN THE MARGINS OF THE COUNCIL

Informal forum with youth representatives

In the margins of the Council on 22 May, young people from the Czech Republic, Germany, France, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden, representatives of the Presidency Youth Event 2008 and the European Youth Forum met and discussed with Youth Ministers from the current and incoming trio of presidencies (Germany, Portugal, Slovenia and France, Czech Republic and Sweden) and with Commissioner Ján Figel' the results of the implementation of the joint trio Presidency programme focusing on the social and professional integration of young people as well as the priorities of the incoming Presidencies. The issue of promoting the participation of young people with fewer opportunities in society that was of special interest to the Slovenian Presidency, was also touched upon. Young people also had an opportunity to express their views on the upcoming new cycle of the framework of cooperation in the youth field.

The informal forum is set in the context of the structured dialogue with young people with the aim of involving them in the decision-making process at all levels.

OTHER BUSINESS

The Council also addressed the following items:

- a) Reception in the EU of **satellite channels** broadcasting **hate speech**
 - Information from the Belgian delegation ([9227/2/08](#))
- b) Review of the **EU regulatory framework for electronic communications** networks and services

The Council took note of the information provided by the Presidency on the progress of discussions on the review of the EU regulatory framework, which are taking place in the Working Party on Telecommunications and Information Society. The intention of the Slovenian presidency is to present progress reports on all three proposals and have an exchange of views of Ministers at the TTE Council on 12 June.

The Commission submitted its proposals in November 2007 ([15379/07](#), [15387/07](#), [15408/07](#)).

- c) Communication from the Commission on the **protection of consumers**, in particular minors, in respect of the use of **video games**
 - Presentation by the Commission ([8805/08](#))
- d) Definition of the concept of **books with regard to reduced VAT**
 - Information from the Swedish delegation ([9267/08](#))
- e) Proposal for a 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)
 - Information from the Presidency on the state of play

- f) Proposal for a regulation establishing a **European Training Foundation**
 - Information from the Presidency on the state of play ([9218/08](#))
- g) Proposal for a recommendation on the establishment of the European **credit system for vocational education and training**
 - Presentation by the Commission ([8288/08](#))
- h) Proposal for a recommendation on the establishment of a **European quality assurance** reference framework for **vocational education and training**
 - Presentation by the Commission ([8289/08](#))
- i) International seminar "**State as the regulator of education services**", Brussels May, 23 2008
 - Information from the Belgian delegation
- j) The **Mosquito**
 - Information from the Belgian delegation ([9307/08](#))
- k) The new **Acropolis museum**
 - Information from the Greek delegation

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**TRANSPORT****Agreement on air services with Pakistan**

The Council adopted a decision approving the signing and provisional application of an agreement on air services with Pakistan.

The agreement is the result of negotiations carried out by the Commission under a mandate granted by the Council in June 2003 with a view to bringing Member States' existing bilateral aviation agreements into line with Community law.

RESEARCH**EU-Russia relations**

The Council approved a draft annotated agenda for the EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council on research to be held in Ljubljana, Slovenia, on 26 May 2008.

This first meeting of the EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council will be an opportunity for both sides to exchange views on the implementation of the common space on research, and in particular on the implementation of the EU-Russia Science and Technology Cooperation Agreement and the prospects for Russia to join the EU's framework programme for research and development as an associate member.
