



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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**PROVISIONAL VERSION**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

2829th meeting of the Council

### **Education, Youth and Culture**

Brussels, 15 and 16 November 2007

President            **Ms Maria de Lurdes RODRIGUES**, Minister for  
Education,  
**Mr José MARIANO GAGO**, Minister for Science,  
Technology and Higher Education,  
**Ms Isabel PIRES DE LIMA**, Minister for Culture and  
**Mr Pedro SILVA PEREIRA**, Minister responsible for  
Portugal's Presidency of the Council

# **P R E S S**

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Rue de la Loi 175 B – 1048 BRUSSELS Tel.: +32 (0)2 281 8716 / 6319 Fax: +32 (0)2 281 8026  
[press.office@consilium.europa.eu](mailto:press.office@consilium.europa.eu) <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/Newsroom>

14806/07 (Presse 256)

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**EN**

## **Main results of the Council**

*The Council adopted a Directive amending Directives 89/665/EEC and 92/13/EEC with regard to improving the effectiveness of review procedures concerning the award of **public contracts**.*

*The Council reached political agreement on a draft Recommendation which will establish a **European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning**.*

*The Council established a general approach on a draft Decision extending the scope of the current **Erasmus Mundus** programme until the end of the current financial framework (2013).*

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<sup>1</sup>

- 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.

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## **PARTICIPANTS**

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

**Belgium:**

Mr Frank VANDENBROUCKE

Vice-Minister-President of the Flemish Government and  
Flemish Minister for Work, Education and Training

**Bulgaria:**

Mr Stefan Lambov DANAILOV

Minister for Culture

**Czech Republic:**

Mr Václav JEHLÍČKA

Minister for Culture

Mr Jan KOCOUREK

Deputy Minister for Transport, Rail and Water Transport  
Section

**Denmark:**

Mr Jens KISLING

Deputy Permanent Representative

**Germany:**

Mr Thomas RACHEL

Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for  
Education and Research

Mr Thomas GOPPEL

Minister for Science, Research and the Arts, Bavaria

**Estonia:**

Mr Tõnis LUKAS

Minister for Education and Science

Ms Laine JÄNES

Minister for Culture

**Ireland:**

Ms Mary HANAFIN

Minister for Education and Science

Mr Seán HAUGHEY

Minister of State at the Department of Education and  
Science and at the Department of Enterprise, Trade and  
Employment with special responsibility for Lifelong  
Learning, Youth Work and School Transport

**Greece:**

Mr Evripidis STYLIANIDIS

Minister for Education and Religious Affairs

Mr Mihail-Georgios LIAPIS

Minister for Culture

**Spain:**

Mr César Antonio MOLINA SÁNCHEZ

Minister for Culture

Ms Mercedes CABRERA CALVO-SOTELO

Minister for Education and Science

Ms Aurora DOMÍNGUEZ GONZÁLEZ

Under-Secretary for Labour and Social Affairs

Ms María José SALGUEIRO CORTIÑAS

Minister for Culture and Tourism of the Autonomous  
Community of Castile-Leon

Mr Juan José MATEOS OTERO

Minister for Education of the Autonomous Community of  
Castile-Leon

Ms Miren AZKARATE

Minister for Culture of the Autonomous Community of the  
Basque Country

**France:**

Ms Christine ALBANEL

Minister for Culture and Communication

**Italy:**

Mr Nando DALLA CHIESA

State Secretary for Universities and Research

**Cyprus:**

Mr Akis CLEANTHOUS

Minister for Education and Culture

**Latvia:**

Ms Baiba RIVŽA

Minister for Education and Science

Mr Ainars BAŠTIKS

Minister for Children and the Family

**Lithuania:**

Ms Roma ŽAKAITIENĖ

Minister for Education and Science

Mr Jonas JUČAS

Minister for Culture

Ms Violeta MURAUSKAITE

Undersecretary, Ministry of Social Security and Labour

**Luxembourg:**

Ms Mady DELVAUX-STEHRÉS

Ms Marie-Josée JACOBS

Minister for Education and Vocational Training  
Minister for the Family and Integration, Minister for  
Equal Opportunities

**Hungary:**

Ms Agnes VARGHA

Deputy Permanent Representative

**Malta:**

Mr Francis ZAMMIT DIMECH

Minister for Tourism and Culture

**Netherlands:**

Mr Peter W. KOK

Deputy Permanent Representative

**Austria:**

Ms Claudia SCHMIED

Mr Johannes HAHN

Federal Minister for Education, Arts and Culture  
Federal Minister for Science and Research

**Poland:**

Mr Andrzej WASKO

Mr Tomasz MERTA

State Secretary, Ministry of Science and Higher Education  
Deputy State Secretary, Ministry of Culture and National  
Heritage

**Portugal:**

Mr Pedro SILVA PEREIRA

Ms Maria de Lurdes RODRIGUES

Ms Isabel PIRES DE LIMA

Mr José MARIANO GAGO

Minister for the Prime Minister's Office  
Minister for Education  
Minister for Culture  
Minister for Science, Technology and Higher Education

**Romania:**

Mr Anton ANTON

Mr Andras DEMETER

State Secretary, Ministry of Education, Research and  
Youth  
State Secretary, Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs

**Slovenia:**

Mr Milan ZVER

Mr Vasko SIMONITI

Ms Mojca KUCLER DOLINAR

Minister for Education and Sport  
Minister for Culture  
Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology

**Slovakia:**

Mr Ján MIKOLAJ

Mr Ivan SEČÍK

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Education  
State Secretary at the Ministry of Culture

**Finland:**

Ms Sari SARKOMAA

Mr Stefan WALLIN

Minister for Education  
Minister for Culture and Sport

**Sweden:**

Mr Lars LEIJONBORG

Ms Lena ADELSON LILJEROTH

Mr Christer HALLERBY

Minister for Education  
Minister for Culture  
State Secretary to the Minister for Integration and Equal  
Opportunities

**United Kingdom:**

Lord TRIESMAN

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Intellectual  
Property and Quality

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**Commission:**

Mr Ján FIGEL

Mr Leonard ORBAN

Member

Member

**ITEMS DEBATED**

**EDUCATION**

**Qualifications for lifelong learning**

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

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

In November 2006, pending the European Parliament's opinion, the Council had already agreed a general approach<sup>1</sup> on the Commission proposal.

In accordance with the provisions of the Treaty and the joint declaration on practical arrangements for the codecision procedure<sup>2</sup>, a series of informal meetings were subsequently held between the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission, with a view to reaching an agreement on this dossier at first reading.

A set of compromise amendments was agreed between the three institutions and was duly approved by the European Parliament at its plenary part-session in October 2007<sup>3</sup>. The Council today confirmed its agreement on the amendments adopted by Parliament at first reading.

Formal adoption of the act will take place once the text has been finalised in all the official languages.

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

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<sup>1</sup> 14478/06 + 14965/07.

<sup>2</sup> OJ C 148, 28.5.1999, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> 14200/07.

**Improving the quality of teacher education – *Council conclusions***

The Council and the Representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council adopted the conclusions in document [14413/07](#).

**Education and training as a key driver of the Lisbon Strategy – *Council Resolution***

The Council adopted the Resolution set out in [13933/07](#).

**New skills for new jobs – *Council Resolution***

The Council adopted the Resolution set out in [14415/07](#).

## **Towards a more multilingual Europe**

Following presentation by the Commission of its report on the implementation of the Action Plan "Promoting language learning and linguistic diversity"<sup>1</sup>, the Council had the opportunity for an exchange of views on the concept of a more multilingual Europe.

The debate focused on the following points:

- the challenges and objectives in this area which require the greatest attention over the medium term (the next 3 to 5 years);
- the actions (education reforms, teacher training provisions, state funding, information campaigns, cooperation with enterprises, etc.) to be envisaged in order to reach these objective(s);
- how the European Union can best support the efforts of Member States to achieve those objectives.

Many delegations stressed the importance of multilingualism for economic and social development and suggested certain measures to promote it such as:

- learning languages at an early age but also lifelong learning, as part of vocational training, higher education as well as adult education;
- suitable training for language teachers;
- greater use of new technologies to teach languages;
- an increase in exchanges and the promotion of mobility;
- the development of language programmes fostering the integration of immigrants.

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<sup>1</sup> 13346/07 + ADD 1.

## **Erasmus Mundus**

Pending the European Parliament's first-reading opinion, the Council established a general approach on a draft Decision<sup>1</sup> extending the scope of the current Erasmus Mundus programme until the end of the current financial framework (2013). The Erasmus Mundus programme is intended to promote higher education in Europe so that it can compete at the highest international level.

The main changes in the new programme compared with the existing programme are as follows:

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

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

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

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<sup>1</sup> Commission proposal: 11708/07.

## **Modernisation of universities**

The Council held a wide-ranging debate on the modernisation of universities as the basis of European competitiveness in a knowledge-based world economy.

The delegations briefly described the modernisation processes underway in their countries, which generally take the form of greater autonomy for universities – resulting in greater responsibility – the adoption of management by objectives and, consequently, the need to be accountable.

Moreover, they acknowledged that the quality of higher education is crucial to innovation, which in turn is one of the key elements for maintaining the EU's level of competitiveness internationally.

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

**Student mobility: broadening the social dimension of Erasmus**

The Council discussed the possibility of stepping up social support for students from less favourable socio-economic backgrounds to extend access to the arrangements for mobility to all students.

The delegations were asked for their opinions on financial, and other forms of, support for students from less favourable socio-economic backgrounds.

**CULTURE**

**First meeting of the EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council**

The Council was briefed by the Presidency and the Commission on the outcome of the first EU-Russia PPC on Culture, held in Lisbon on 25 October 2007.

At that meeting the EU and the Russian Federation confirmed their commitment to applying the cultural aspects of the Road Map on the Common Space of Research and Education. The PPC also adopted a joint statement on the future direction of EU-Russia cultural cooperation.

The Council also took the opportunity to discuss the future of EU-Russia cultural cooperation.

**European Agenda for Culture – *Council Resolution***

The Council adopted the Resolution set out in [14485/07](#).

## **European Capitals of Culture 2011**

In accordance with Decision 1622/2006/EC 1, the Council designated Turku (Finland) and Tallinn (Estonia) "European Capitals of Culture 2011".

The concept of the "European Capital of Culture" was originated by the Council in 1985, at the initiative of Ms Melina Mercouri, Greek Minister for Culture, as a means of bringing European peoples closer together.

The event has proved a success in terms of media coverage, development of culture and tourism and increased awareness of inhabitants of the importance of their town being chosen.

The EU's support for this event for 2007 – 2019 is regulated by Decision 1622/2006/EC.

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 304, 3.11.2006, p. 1.

**YOUTH**

**Voluntary activities of young people – *Council Resolution\****

The Council adopted the Resolution set out in [14425/07](#).

**Transversal approach to youth policy – Council conclusions**

The Council adopted the conclusions set out in [14426/07](#), containing a series of key messages for the European Council.

## **European Youth Pact**

The Council held an exchange of views on the better consideration of youth issues in the implementation of the Lisbon strategy.

- *Sustainable measures to be developed to enable a new working method to achieve the Lisbon strategy's objectives on youth.*
- *Instruments that could be improve the implementation and monitoring of the European Youth Pact.*

The adoption of the European Youth Pact by the March 2005 European Council indicated the recognition, at the highest level, of the importance of integrating young people into society and employment, and of making better use of the potential they represent.

There are three aspects to the Pact:

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

Since its adoption, the Pact has served as a tool for incorporating youth-related problems into national implementation of the Lisbon strategy.

The exchange of views also provided an opportunity to prepare the ground for implementation of an innovative working method that will enable the strategy objectives in the youth field to be attained.

In this context, the discussion also contributed to the assessment process (2009) of the framework for cooperation between the Member States in the field of youth.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

- Proposal for a Regulation establishing a European Institute for Technology (EIT)
  - Information from the Presidency on the state of play
  
- Applications regarding the European Capital of Culture for the year 2012
  - Information from the Portuguese and Slovene delegations
  
- Events organised during the Portuguese Presidency in the field of education
  - = Closing Conference of the 20th Anniversary of the Erasmus Programme (Lisbon, 4 and 5 October 2007)
  
  - = High-Level Meeting on modernising universities in Europe (Lisbon, 6 November 2007)
  
  - Information from the Presidency
  
- Compendium of good practice on modernising higher education
  - Information from the Commission on the state of play
  
- 2008 joint interim report of the Council and the Commission on progress under the "Education & Training 2010" work programme
  - Presentation by the Commission
  
- Events organised during the Portuguese Presidency in the field of Culture
  - = Conference "Disclosure and Preservation: Fostering European Culture in the Digital Landscape" (Lisbon, 7 and 8 September 2007)
  
  - = Meeting of the Cultural Contact Points (Lisbon, 28 September 2007)
  
  - = Conference "Audiovisual online content" (Lisbon, 7 and 9 October 2007)
  
  - = Conference "The Culture and Creative Sector in the Lisbon Agenda (Lisbon, 31 October 1 November 2007)
  
  - = Meeting of the National Coordinators of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue – 2008 (Lisbon, 14 November 2007);
  
  - Information from the Presidency

- Forthcoming events in the field of Culture
  - = Cultural Heritage and Society (Lisbon, 5 and 6 December 2007);
  - = Meeting of the European Board of Archives (Lisbon, 7 December 2007)
  - Information from the Presidency
  
- Protection of European underwater cultural heritage
  - Information from the Spanish delegation
  
- Declaration by the European Commission-Government of the People's Republic of China in the fields of culture and education
  - Information from the Commission

**OTHER ITEMS APPROVED**

**INTERNAL MARKET**

**Chemicals – REACH Regulation – Enlargement**

The Council adopted a Regulation adapting the REACH Regulation (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals) by reason of the accession of Bulgaria and Romania (13366/07).

The Regulation amends the definition of phase-in substance so as to subject substances manufactured or marketed in Bulgaria and Romania before accession to the European Union to the same conditions as substances manufactured or marketed in the other EU Member States.

**Review procedures concerning the award of public contracts\***

The Council adopted at first reading, further to agreement reached with the European Parliament, a Directive amending Council Directives 89/665/EEC and 92/13/EEC with regard to improving the effectiveness of review procedures concerning the award of public contracts (3634/07).

The main aim of this new Directive is to add the essential clarifications to Directives 89/665/EEC and 92/13/EEC to ensure that the Community as a whole fully benefits from the positive effects of the modernisation and simplification of the rules on public procurement achieved by Directives 2004/18/EC and 2004/17/EC.

The Directive provides for minimum standstill periods during which the conclusion of the contract in question is suspended, irrespective of whether conclusion occurs at the time of signature of the contract or not. The standstill period should give the tenderers concerned sufficient time to examine the contract award decision and to assess whether it is appropriate to initiate a review procedure.

**FISHERIES**

**Agreement with Madagascar**

The Council adopted a Regulation on the conclusion of the Fisheries Partnership Agreement with the Republic of Madagascar and a Decision allocating among the Member States the fishing opportunities laid down in the Protocol to the Agreement, for the period from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2012 (13153/07 REV 1 and 13154/07).

The fishing opportunities laid down in the Protocol, which was amended on 16 March 2007, were fixed according to three categories: (1) for the fishing category "freezer tuna seiners": 43 vessels; (2) for the fishing category "surface longliners over 100 GT": 50 vessels and (3) for the fishing category "surface longliners of 100 GT or below": 26 vessels.

In addition, 5 vessels are authorised to conduct exploratory line or bottom longline fishing for demersal species for two six-month periods.

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