



S&D CULT POLICY PAPER

OUR VISION FOR CULTURE, EDUCATION, MEDIA, YOUTH AND A SOLIDARITY-BASED CITIZENSHIP

INTRODUCTION

We live in a constantly changing world. The social, economic, cultural, digital and technological changes of the paradigm we are living through are rapidly transforming the approach of citizens to education, art and culture, empowering them to enjoy wider access to knowledge and different ways to access content, multiplying opportunities to learn, to create and to participate even more than ever before.

However, a broken social elevator has led to a decrease in the confidence of the younger generations in education and culture as a vehicle for quality employment or for empowerment. They have instead started to see education and culture just as instruments for generating personal satisfaction and social interaction amongst all generations.

Our European Socialists and Democrats (S&D) family in the European Parliament is aware of the challenges ahead but determined to embrace the opportunities that can arise from them. We want to actively shape the design of a more inclusive future European society.

We are aware that only universal access to quality inclusive education systems from an early age, with a simultaneous lifelong learning approach, can reduce and prevent inequalities, social discrimination, and poverty, whilst promoting human dignity, personal and social development, quality employability and true European citizenship.

It is only through access to education and culture, inspired by and oriented to our shared values that form the basis of our common European identity, that we can develop both critical thinking and openness, as well as social well-being, inclusion and cohesion.

This is also the main tool to fight social exclusion and marginalisation, fake news, hate speech and the spread of intentional misinformation that, also through the internet and other social platforms, feeds populism and dangerous nationalism.

We are committed to playing an active role in the development of an effective European Education Area, to promote equal opportunities and social inclusion, while respecting subsidiarity, through a convergence of national education systems based on quantitative and qualitative benchmarks. In this way, we want to foster mobility, automatic mutual recognition of diplomas and outcomes of learning periods abroad, a common sense of belonging to Europe and better employability.

Despite the deplorable fact that the field of culture was not mentioned in the ten priorities of the European Commission for the 2015-2019 period, we have worked with dedication to develop a holistic approach to European cultural policy, starting with its identification as one of the sector that could benefit from the Juncker Plan, recognising that the richness of European cultural and linguistic diversity is not in contradiction with the appreciation of our common cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible.

We believe that Europe should provide strong foundations for the functioning of our societies, as well as common goals and a legal framework clearly defined at the level of the European Union (EU), in respect of European common and long-standing values, asking for example for a courageous revision of the Treaties to grant the EU with more and wider competences in education and culture. This is essential to help us face the future so as to continue to ensure peace and cooperation.

Achieving these goals can only be done by investing in people. People have always been our priority. Education is a pre-condition for poverty eradication, human development and social inclusiveness, and investing in people first means investing in their education, skills and competences, with a specific focus on youth.

Indeed, the experiences of many young Europeans, researchers, students and artists show that the European dimension is a true space of freedom, creativity and opportunities.

We are committed to step-up to these challenges and put forward all our proposals for a European Union that puts in place a strong social agenda, which gives priority to quality education and employment prospects and a greater access to culture.

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EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICIES

The EU education policy, albeit falling within member states' competence, has developed over the last decades by supporting quality inclusive education, collaborative research, converging integration and modernisation of schools and universities via partnerships, networks and mobility of students, teachers and researchers, fostering multilingualism and internationalisation, and offering opportunities for knowledge development and dialogue.

The European approach to education, which cannot be solely based on economic purposes or motivated by cost-effectiveness, has emerged as an important aspect of the gradual, bottom-up, grass-roots, social and political progressive building of the EU, in line with the **Declaration of the 2017 Social Summit of Gothenburg** which, thanks to our continuous work, has put education at the very heart of its priorities.

Nowadays, the European education and training systems should be upgraded in line with the fast changing economic, technological and societal environment ensuring the access to quality education at all stages. The European policy for education has to reinforce the importance and the need to reverse the trend of education cuts in the member states by supporting national measures. This work must aim to boost more funding for education fields, not only to improve infrastructures, but also to focus on training of teachers, trainers and the schools staff and ensuring lifelong learning opportunities for everyone.

For these reasons, we call for an acceleration of the construction of a **European Education Area** and **for tripling the financial envelope dedicated to Erasmus+** in the future Multiannual financial framework 2021-2027, as well as for keeping the "plus" in the name so as to strengthen all its components: formal, non-formal and informal education, training and professional development, youth activities, arts and sport. We are working for a programme that must be more inclusive and accessible than ever, with a stronger focus on young people with fewer opportunities, school and youth exchanges and vocational training, ambitious cooperation with third countries, and further support to small-scale partnerships.

Our key challenges and **political priorities in the field of education and training are:**

- 1. Education as a right inherent to each individual and a tool for integral personal development.** We are committed to guarantee **quality lifelong education for all**, to develop everyone's potential starting with early education, with a particular attention to those with fewer opportunities, including marginalised people, people with disabilities, refugees and migrants, in order to reduce the growing social disadvantages, promote gender balance, inclusion of young women in STE(A)M education, provide second chance education, and tackle educational poverty and early school leaving. We have put people first, both within and outside the EU, by increasing opportunities for educational mobility with third countries, including those in conflict, thanks to the valuable experience of the educational corridors. We also support the broadening of member states' curricula to include gender studies, media literacy, and education for sustainability, peace and human rights.

- 2. Education as a lifelong process.** We strongly back the perspective of lifelong learning for social inclusion, integration and innovation, employability, and the enhancement of key competences and skills throughout the course of life, as well as their inclusion in personal curricula. We believe in the potential of online learning (e.g., through Massive Open Online Courses) and of blended forms of learning. Quality education and training systems, from early years to an adult age, promote active citizenship and understanding of common values, and as such help shape an open, inclusive, pluralist, democratic and tolerant society, as stated in our report on **Modernisation of education in the EU**.

- 3. Education as a sustainable development goal.** We promote the pivotal role of human capital for sustainable development through an interdisciplinary approach to learning processes, as enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goal 4 'Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all'. The approach includes the **New Skills Agenda for Europe** - formal, non-formal and informal -, the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), and a reformed **Europass**.

- 4. Establishing a real skills guarantee for all.** As Socialists and Democrats, we believe that learning and training opportunities must be a right for everyone, at every stage of life, to acquire transversal skills such as numeracy, digital and media literacy, critical thinking, social skills and relevant life skills.

- 5. Education as a cornerstone for building European citizenship.** We call for increasing cooperation between training and education systems and different curricula, with a focus on programmes, contents and curricula for building a true active European citizenship, and a further strengthened cooperation via the Bologna Process.

- 6. Non-formal and informal education as a way to personal and professional fulfilment.** The current lack of recognition of non-formal and informal learning needs to be addressed urgently. Despite the progress made in the last few years in the context of the implementation of Council recommendation on validation of non-formal and informal learning by 2018, the provision of real access, recognition and financial support remains a challenge especially for disadvantaged groups who are in need of priority access to validation. We advocate for the creation of a European strategy with a view to establishing a common framework for recognition of informal and non-formal learning in order to facilitate the creation of relevant national procedures and to reach out to a wider group of people.

- 7. Education as a key enabler in the digital world.** Conscious of the challenges arising from technological and digital evolutions, including in the learning process, which need to take into account the virtual and blended dimensions of learning alongside learning in the classroom, we support the integration of the digital strategy in all educational and training processes, a position that we expressed in the report on **Educating in the digital era**.

- This is the battlefield where we must continue our political fight in the upcoming years, according to **our strategic objectives**:

a. Education about Europe, both inside and outside of the classroom, to reinforce our common European citizenship with a focus on personal and collective responsibility and active participation, validating formal, non-formal, and informal and citizenship competences. We insist on the importance of key competences such as creativity, entrepreneurship and volunteering as well as solidarity, intercultural and interreligious dialogue, especially in light of the many humanitarian crises and the migratory fluxes we are facing.

As stressed in the report on **Learning EU at school**, we want a quota of school curricula to be dedicated to the teaching of history, European civic education and also to education in our common and diverse cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible, so as to better understand and protect our national and European cultural heritage.

b. Enhancing the quality and inclusiveness of education and training systems, as stressed in the Report on **Education and Training 2020 (ET2020)**, in response to new social and occupational challenges.

We believe that an interdisciplinary approach would help to overcome the current imbalance between the existing skills and jobs. We call for **further inclusion** and thus call on member states to increase scholarships and other opportunities for students, especially those with disabilities or from marginalised communities. We highlight the need to **valorise excellences** by strengthening partnerships and dialogue among national education systems via EU/OECD quantitative and qualitative benchmarks.

We are committed to develop cooperation with formal and non-formal providers of education, create more coherence between training networks and tertiary education, shift the educational paradigm from STEM to STEAM (including Arts among Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), and to empower research in pedagogical and educational matters as well as in social sciences and humanities.

We call for courageous support of the **cooperation between teaching and research** in the framework of the Horizon Europe programme, of **the European joint degrees and doctorates**, the European Universities and the Centres for Vocational Excellences, as well as the use of new technologies to facilitate access and fruition of European cultural heritage through assistive technologies for people with disabilities.

We want **Internet access for all**, and a guarantee of a **faster and higher Internet connectivity for every school in the EU**. We must reclaim the Internet as a common good and promote digital and media literacy in order to combat fake news and online abuse.

c. Accelerating the creation of the European Education Area, in order to guarantee **universal access to inclusive quality education and training for all**, to make the freedom of movement of persons, workers and learners across the EU effective, to promote investments on the Europeanisation and internationalisation of both teachers' and students' curricula and increase of their mobility opportunities, also through the **automatic mutual recognition of diplomas and learning periods abroad**.

We are strongly committed to make the **European Students e-Card** a reality as soon as possible, in close cooperation with relevant stakeholder, allowing students to identify their status and CVs, and to facilitate mobility at the European level through improved access to cultural, housing and education services across the EU.

Experiencing national/European citizenship is nowadays intuitive and self-explanatory for the new European generations. Yet, as stressed in our **Youth Strategy**, young Europeans want to concretely exercise their right to enjoy effective participation. Hence our efforts to give them more opportunities in the new Erasmus+ programme 2021-2027, asking for a **tripling of the** previous **budget** and an integrated approach with traineeships and education.

Thanks to our S&D Group, young people can benefit today from European resources through the **Youth Guarantee**, a scheme for job and training opportunities for young people that since 2014 has been supporting 10 million Europeans, with a focus on those who have been neither in employment nor in education or training (NEETs). We have also launched a strong call for the **Child Guarantee** to tackle the multidimensional aspects of child poverty.

1. European Solidarity Corps. We have fought hard for an invaluable opportunity for young people aged 18-30 to promote an active, European and solidarity-based citizenship in all fields. This is a concrete way to respond to the needs of society by learning through empathy and to promote personal, civil and professional development of young people in the context of various crises and humanitarian calls.

We have been striving to ensure these activities are inspired by grassroots' voluntary work (accounting for the 90 % of the programme) as a means of gaining concrete experience of European citizenship. These opportunities must be inclusive, even when including a training and employability dimension within non-profit organisations.

2. European citizenship is not only supported through actions across all EU policy-making, but also through a dedicated programme (Europe for Citizens programme, which we expect to become the **Citizens, Rights and Values** programme in the financial period 2021-2027). We insist on the need to target active citizenship, both performed by small, especially local associations and organised groups of citizens; to foster remembrance of our difficult past and truly promote a common European dimension of living together and welcoming new comers in our societies; to promote inclusive citizenship, civic and social participation in the democratic life of the Union and citizens' engagement in our society. Therefore we call for doubling the financing of the 'Citizens' engagement and participation' strand of the programme, which accounts for at €500 million - a figure equivalent to barely €1 per EU citizen.

3. We are aware of the social value of **sport**, especially grassroots sports, and its role in promoting social inclusion of people with fewer opportunities, including refugees and migrants, as well as healthy lifestyles, fair play and loyalty, and the fight against gender-based violence. We are reaffirming support for **youth sport associations**, for a proper recognition of the **role of sport in school curricula** and promotion for **cooperation between schools and sports associations**. Furthermore, we are committed to supporting **dual careers of athletes**, conciliating sport and study, and promoting the possibility to become professionals in sport.

At an international level, we have raised our voice for **the EU to ratify and to urge member states not to impede on national ratification of paramount international instruments dealing with sport**, such as the Convention to combat match fixing, the anti-doping Convention and the Convention on safety and security at football matches and other sports events.

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CULTURAL AND CREATIVE POLICIES

We live in a complex period of multiple crises where the very sense of belonging to the European project is threatened by the steady spreading of nationalism and populism across the continent. **Investing in knowledge and culture** and devoting a year specifically to re-discovering and valorising the great European cultural richness and diversity, as well as intercultural and interreligious dialogue, is the most effective and sustainable way to build bridges through mutual understanding, knocking down the walls of indifference and preventing conflicts.

Our S&D Group has long battled to have **culture**, together with education, **included as an essential component in the European Pillar of Social Rights** resulting from the 2017 Social Summit of Gothenburg. It must also be remembered that **access to culture is a human right**.

During this mandate, **the S&D Group in the Committee on Culture and Education has maintained a leading role in shaping a more coherent European policy for culture thanks in part to the hard work of our many rapporteurs**. We have insisted on transcending the individual sectorial programmes, while adopting instead a **holistic approach** to all European policy fields and reaffirming the intrinsic value of culture and creativity.

Our political commitment has produced important results, namely the **new European Agenda for Culture** setting the strategic multiannual framework in the field of culture and creativity; the **European Year of Cultural Heritage (EYCH) and its Action Plan** that will embody the Year's legacy with dedicated actions valorising youth, intercultural dialogue, an horizontal multilevel and multi-stakeholders governance, and a new line of financing in the **next Creative Europe programme**.

1. Cultural heritage as a resource for Europe. The proclamation of the **2018 European Year of Cultural Heritage is a great success of our S&D Group.** It reflects a long-awaited shift towards an integrated approach to European cultural heritage and reaching a common understanding that cultural heritage (tangible and intangible, natural and digital) is a precious resource for social inclusion, social innovation, the new economy (including digital economy), high-quality employment, international cooperation, sustainable development and, last but not least, our European identity.

We believe that this initiative can really help define the priorities of a policy on cultural heritage, which is now a new feature of the future Creative Europe programme 2021-2027.

After two World Wars, we were confronted with the question of whether it was possible to write a history of Europe. Even if the task of describing unitary history has turned out to be very complex, we do believe that elements of true unity lie in our common culture, philosophy, religions and art, and more particularly in the development of a true European space, as already initiated in the last century. The legacy of the European Year of Cultural Heritage and its follow-up must therefore address the improved access and participation of all citizens, especially young people, as well as the protection of cultural heritage, promotion of innovation, and sustainability in this important sector.

2. Culture to re-unite Europe. Although cultural policies fall mainly within the competence of member states, a European cultural policy has developed itself over the last decades with the aim of supporting transnational projects, the mobility of artists, culture professionals and works of art, as well as encouraging networks and partnerships, co-productions, market access and training.

We strongly believe in the main objective of the Faro Convention of 2015, stating that each of us has the right to benefit from cultural heritage and to contribute towards its enrichment.

Creative Europe, the multiannual programme for cultural, creative and audio-visual sectors, connects today a large European community of cinema and audio-visual industries, as well as performing arts, museums and art galleries, festivals, architecture, books and music (which for the first time is targeted by a specific line of action of the programme). This programme is underfinanced and **we are asking for a doubling of the previous budget.**

We believe that European talents - especially the younger generations - should be able to circulate and to circulate their works, have the chance to work on co-productions, and be further supported in the face of the current lack of funds that causes a major loss of opportunities.

3. Culture for a global Europe. With its multifaceted cultural diversity, Europe is a key intercultural actor on the global stage, where it promotes its fundamental and democratic values, as we stressed on our report on the **role of intercultural dialogue, cultural diversity and education in promoting fundamental values.**

Culture plays also a key role in international relations. Time is ripe for a stronger role for the EU on the international scenario and for sharing objectives that reward our excellences in the international arena, as stressed by the report: **Towards an EU Strategy for international cultural relations** and as recalled in the new Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument. The new Western Balkan Cultural Heritage Route, for example, proves to be a powerful tool for integration of the Balkan region in the EU.

We have worked for strong rules on **the import of cultural goods** (for the first time covered by EU legislation), especially in order to protect goods coming from areas of conflict, while recognising the destruction of cultural heritage as a war crime or a crime against humanity. We are also committed to promoting the mobility of cultural and creative professionals and artists, as well as staff of cultural institutions. We want to pave the way for future improved understanding of the challenges facing our cultural institutions and those who work in them.

We have highlighted the importance of international mobility for artists and cultural professionals, the people-to-people approach, an enhanced role of the network of European Institutes of Culture (EUNIC), and the inclusion of culture, education and research in all bilateral agreements signed by the EU.

4. Culture as a driver for sustainable growth. We recognise the intrinsic value of cultural, creative and artistic expression as an exercise of freedom, but we are also aware of the strategic, social and economic importance of the cultural and creative industries and sectors, which are linked to local territories and are thus less subject to offshoring and delocalisation, and provide jobs for around 12 million people. Their development, promotion, protection, and adequate funding fosters competitiveness and enables them to realise their potential, notably in terms of job creation and growth, as we recalled in our report on a **coherent EU policy for cultural and creative industries.**

We believe in further exploring the potential of culture and creative sectors and industries for sustainable growth in the field of tourism in particular, including through the Cultural Routes that are a key opportunity for success across our regions, especially with a cross-border dimension.

5. Culture in the digital environment. The revised **AVMS Directive** has come into force. It updates rules on audio-visual media services in Europe in order to achieve a better level-playing field for all kinds of play-out, live or on-demand, on all platforms including social media. It was therefore necessary to align the offline and online rules on advertising. Audiovisual media services providers should take appropriate measures to **combat content inciting violence, racial and religious hatred and terrorism**, with specific attention to the protection of minors and consumers, and the **accessibility for people with disabilities**. All other providers shall organise their platform in a way that it fits adults and minors accordingly and they shall act as soon as they know about content that might be problematic under a certain aspect, i.e. with the use of transparent and user-friendly reporting mechanisms.

In order to support cultural and linguistic diversity, we succeeded in ensuring that 30 % of content included in video-on-demand (VOD) platforms' catalogues is European. Furthermore, VOD providers are asked to contribute to the development of European audio-visual productions, either by investing directly in content or by contributing to national funds. In conclusion, we want fair rules to promote creativity and quality within the European audio-visual sector.

Our work on the Marrakesh Treaty to facilitate access to published works for persons who are blind, visually impaired or otherwise print disabled has also been significant in making online print materials available to people with visual impairments.

In the revised **copyright directive**, currently under negotiations with the Commission and the Council, the S&D Group in the Culture and Education Committee has strongly fought in particular **to ensure that European artists, creators and performers, as well as news publishers and journalists, are paid for their work**, like every other worker, when it is used by content sharing platforms. In this way, we have affirmed and are about to obtain the **principle of a fair and proportionate remuneration** at European level, so as to put an end to the transfer of value currently taking place at the expense of creators and authors

6. Culture as a key asset to finance. We believe that access to loans, in particular for **small and medium enterprises** (SMEs), is crucial in order to support cultural and creative industries. We believe it is necessary to develop skills enabling creative and cultural entrepreneurs to assess risks arising from the lack of material safeguards and the excessive reliance on intangible assets.

It is therefore important to expand the range of financing instruments available to micro enterprises and SMEs through innovative financing models, such as microcredit, crowdfunding, reimbursable grants, risk capital investments, and venture capital funds.

Within this framework, we fought hard, together with members from other committees, to get intellectual property rights accepted by the banking system as secured guarantees and open up both the current European Fund for Strategic Investment the new **InvestEU** instrument to cultural, audio-visual and creative sectors, thanks to an improved interaction with Creative Europe and taking into account the specific features of the current Guarantee Facility.

- From these great achievements, we will continue the political fight in the upcoming years, according to **our strategic objectives**:

- a. **Mainstreaming culture across all the various EU policy fields.** Culture must not only be included in the EU multiannual programmes but it needs also to be put at the very heart of the EU political project in order to properly reflect its transversal contribution to numerous policy fields, as the European Year of Cultural Heritage has proved.

We want in particular to support **artistic research and research in humanities**, and the recognition of cultural institutions as key actors in this field, as well as providers of educational opportunities. A stronger role for **culture in social and regional development** is also key to creating more cohesive and inclusive local communities, as we stressed in light of the new **European Social Fund + (ESF+)**, the **European Regional Development Funds (ERDF)**, and the **European Territorial Cooperation Goal (ETC or INTERREG Programme)**.

We believe that we need to develop a common European market of cultural, creative and audiovisual products and contents, filling in the existent gaps and fragmentations so as to reaffirm the common European identity, in the respect of cultural and linguistic diversity.

- b. **Supporting cultural and creative sectors and professionals**, providing artists, cultural operators and craftspeople with training programs, stable social security conditions and a transparent taxation system. To this end, we are working for the establishment of an **independent European Observatory for cultural and creative sectors**.

We want to support journalists, freedom of expression, pluralism, media literacy and objectivity of the media, as well as further enhance the dimension of both European and international mobility of artists by calling on member states to ease their artistic visas procedures.

We believe that synergies with sectorial programmes, such as InvestEU and Horizon Europe, should enable cultural and creative sectors to benefit from financing opportunities and access to finance through their dedicated lines, in order to support and develop the cultural and creative sectors and SMEs, including micro-enterprises and social enterprises.

- c. **Accelerating the integration of culture and creativity in the new digital environment.** We truly believe that we have to step-up to the digital challenges that our current time poses and work in a visionary way to integrate new technologies and culture, for example **supporting interactions between research and culture**, the role of **augmented reality for enhancing access to culture and cultural content**, also through assistive technologies, the **contribution of videogames with educational and narrative contexts**.

We have to further reflect then on how to keep a good balance between automation and social aspects, digital technologies and human expertise, which calls for a strategy on occupational literacy as a means of empowering citizens to take advantage of the digital era through lifelong learning, a focus on quality jobs and the promotion of well-being.

CONCLUSION

We believe that education and culture are crucial features of the social bottom-up approach to the ongoing construction of a cohesive European Union. They are also powerful tools for building people's well-being and social cohesion as well as for strengthening inter-cultural dialogue and international relations. We believe it is vital that the EU does its utmost to develop a **respect for all languages and pluralistic traditions** and to improve upon the excellences already achieved in the international arena.

We believe in and we call for strengthening the European integration process.

We as S&D are ready to step-up to the ambitious challenge of a reform of the Treaties, which requires the unanimity of all member states, so to **provide the EU with genuine competences in the fields of education and culture**. In a time of skepticism, our brave, visionary and forward-looking political activism is the necessary path to follow. **It is only by standing together that we can achieve the best results for all Europeans.**

To succeed, **we need to foster a joint sense of responsibility amongst all stakeholders**. Implementation of any legislative framework must be done in compliance with the member states and in full respect of the competences that they hold whilst taking into account the diversity of the situations in each member state.

We insist on sharing the best practices of the member states and on the necessity to work together in order to implement them across the European Union. As there is no perfect model, only cooperation, exchange of best practices, and a common reflection by all stakeholders (including civil society, non-profit, industry and governments) building links between culture, research and citizenship, can bring results and an added value.

Education and culture are the bases of what makes us Europeans. Therefore, **we want to reinforce a strong and resilient European citizenship and identity** by promoting culture and education through European values whilst pointing out that there is no contradiction between cultural diversity and common values.

By means of cultural heritage and reformed education systems, we call for building the bridges of mutual understanding whilst knocking down the walls of indifference and preventing conflict.

We want a society based on social inclusion and intercultural understanding.
We want to make the principles and values of cultural democracy a reality for all citizens.

We want to bring Europe closer to the citizens and the citizens closer to Europe and we are ready to fight for the founding principles of the Union.

We believe that our diverse cultures and vision for improved European education can be a lever for building a stable and flourishing common future.