



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 28.3.2008
COM(2008) 159 final

2008/0064 (COD)

Proposal for a
DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL
concerning the European Year of Creativity and Innovation (2009)

(presented by the Commission)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

European Year of Creativity and Innovation (2009)

1. INTRODUCTION

Europe needs to boost its capacity for creativity and innovation for both social and economic reasons. The European Council has repeatedly recognised innovation as crucial to Europe's ability to respond effectively to the challenges and opportunities of globalisation. In December 2006, for example, it noted that "Europe needs a strategic approach aimed at creating an innovation-friendly environment where knowledge is converted into innovative products and services"¹. The modern economy, with its emphasis on adding value by means of better use of knowledge and rapid innovation, requires a broadening of the creative skills base involving the whole population. In particular, there is a need for skills and competences that enable people to embrace change as an opportunity and to be open to new ideas that promote innovation and active participation in a culturally diverse, knowledge-based society.

Innovative capacity is closely linked with creativity as a personal attribute based on cultural and interpersonal skills and values. To be harnessed to full advantage, it needs to be widely disseminated throughout the population. The role of education and training as a determining factor in enhancing creativity, innovation performance and competitiveness was again emphasised by the European Council in March 2007 when it put forward the concept of the "knowledge triangle" comprising education, research and innovation².

The "Education and Training 2010" work programme³ and the Community Action Programmes in the fields of Lifelong Learning and Youth policies, and in related fields such as culture, provide opportunities at European level for exchanging experience and good

¹ Presidency conclusions – Brussels, 14/15 December 2006, paragraph 28.

² Presidency conclusions – Brussels, 8/9 March 2007.

³ *Education and Training 2010 – the success of the Lisbon strategy hinges on urgent reforms*: joint report adopted by the Council and the Commission on 26 February 2004. See also the detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe, OJ C 142, 14.6.2002, p.1.

practices and for deepening stakeholders' understanding of ways of promoting creativity and a capacity for innovation. In particular, the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning⁴ provides a European reference framework covering eight key competences (defined as “knowledge, skills and attitudes”) which encompass a broad agenda for education and training at all stages of life. Many of these competences are relevant to creativity and innovation in the personal, interpersonal and intercultural fields, including "mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology", "digital competence", "learning to learn", “social and civic competences”, “sense of initiative and entrepreneurship” and “cultural awareness and expression”.

Declaring a European Year is an effective way of helping to meet challenges by raising public awareness, disseminating information about good practices, stimulating research, creativity and innovation and promoting policy debate and change. By combining action at Community, national, regional and local levels, and creating openings for participation by interested stakeholders, it can generate synergies in information and awareness-raising activities, and help to focus policy debate on a specific issue.

The aim for 2009 is to promote creativity and capacity for innovation as key competences for all. This is consistent with the Commission Communication “*A broad-based innovation strategy for the EU*” which notes that “without education as a core policy, innovation will remain unsupported. It must promote talent and creativity from an early stage⁵.” The Lifelong Learning Programme is thus an important vehicle for supporting this initiative. Other policies and programmes in related domains, such as enterprise, the information society, research, cohesion or rural development, will support this European Year where appropriate.

2. BACKGROUND

Creativity is a human characteristic that manifests itself in many fields and contexts, from works of art, design and craft to scientific breakthroughs and entrepreneurship, including social entrepreneurship. The multidimensional character of creativity implies that knowledge in a wide range of different domains – both technological and non-technological - can be the basis for creativity and innovation. Innovation is the successful realisation of new ideas; creativity is the *sine qua non* of innovation. New products, services, processes, strategies and organisations require people to generate new ideas and associations between them. Competences such as creative thinking and advanced problem-solving are therefore as essential in economic and social as in artistic fields.

The communities of creativity and innovation – those of the arts on the one hand and technology and business on the other – are often not well connected. An important contribution of the Year will be to bridge these worlds, by showing with concrete examples the value of considering the concepts of creativity and innovation together in a number of domains, such as in schools, universities, private and public organisations.

An important and often untapped source of innovation can be found outside of an organisation: the user. User needs can be the starting point for developing, improving and/or designing new, more competitive products and services. With appropriate competences, users can not only provide an innovation-friendly market environment as consumers, but also solve unforeseen problems and participate in the development of products and services themselves.

⁴ Recommendation 2006/962/EC, OJ L 394, 30.12.2006, p.10.

⁵ COM(2006) 502 final.

The positive effect of consumer involvement explains why producers of new technologies who work closely with users have a good success rate with innovation.

The relationship between competences and innovation is dynamic: people's attitudes as well as their skills and knowledge help drive innovation, and innovation in turn contributes to changing demand for skills, in a society as well as at company level. No single skills mix is a recipe for successful innovation in all circumstances. Innovation processes are becoming increasingly networked, multidisciplinary and problem-oriented, setting ever higher demands for generic skills such as learning to learn and a capacity to interact effectively with others. Hence the importance of recognising competences as “knowledge, skills and attitudes”, as does the Recommendation on key competences. Attitudes to change may be as important as more formal qualifications.

A fundamental quality underpinning creative and innovative capacity is motivation and a sense of initiative. The foundations of such qualities are laid in the early phases of personal development. Creativity occupies a significant share of the curriculum in early school years, but its share diminishes drastically in the course of pupils' education. One major challenge facing education systems is, therefore, how to keep the spark of creativity alive in children and young people. The responses have included, for instance, putting greater emphasis on creative subjects, developing new approaches to learning and fostering various extra-curricular activities.

At the same time, intercultural and interpersonal competences are vital to equip individuals to participate in an effective and constructive way in social and working life, particularly in increasingly diverse societies. Civic competence equips individuals to participate fully in civic life, based on knowledge of social and political concepts and structures and a commitment to active and democratic participation. These skills and knowledge sets are therefore also important to foster creativity and a capacity for innovation.

The mounting pressure to develop creative, innovative and critical skills implies that traditional teaching approaches based on direct instruction or lecturing are no longer adequate. They are being replaced by more learner-focused models that are based on the learner's active involvement in the process of reflection and interpretation. Learning is achieved together with others, creatively changing social practices and habits. An organisational culture supporting openness and creativity is a vital precondition for successful learning and innovation.

3. CONSULTATION OF INTERESTED PARTIES AND EXPECTED IMPACT

3.1. Consultation of interested parties

Informal discussions about organising a European Year of Creativity and Innovation, based on existing programmes, have been held with Members of the European Parliament and with the Member States. The substance of the initiative has been widely welcomed, and the growing number of requests for further information received from a wide range of stakeholders indicates that there is strong demand for it.

3.2. Expected impact

The Education and Training 2010 work programme produces many outputs, including biennial reports on cooperation across a broad range of education and training issues and recommendations or other non-binding principles or instruments dealing with specific topics such as recognition of non-formal and informal learning outcomes or lifelong guidance.

However, many of its activities and outputs are addressed primarily to practitioners and policymakers, and are not sufficiently visible for a wider audience.

A European Year which focuses on developing creativity and capacity for innovation would provide an opportunity to bring some of those outputs to the attention of the general public in a way which is accessible and can capture their imagination, while drawing on the results of analyses and policy recommendations already endorsed at European level. It would also give stakeholders, including institutions and civil-society organisations operating at European, national, regional or local level, an opportunity to make a greater impact and gain wider recognition for their efforts by participating in a Europe-wide initiative. The Year will therefore help to strengthen the impact of existing processes under the Education and Training 2010 work programme and to generate a critical mass of activities targeting the development of skills related to creativity and innovation. It will also build on the results of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008) by emphasising the importance of interpersonal and intercultural skills in fostering creativity and a capacity for innovation in a culturally diverse environment.

In this way, the Year is expected to have at least as significant an impact as previous initiatives of the same type in the field of education, such as the European Year of Lifelong Learning (1996) and the European Year of Education through Sport (2004). The current focus on competitiveness, knowledge and skills in the context of the Lisbon strategy is likely to provide an environment in which stakeholders will be all the more receptive to the outputs of the Year.

Activities in relevant policy fields other than education, such as enterprise, media, cohesion, rural development and research, are already contributing, directly or indirectly, to promoting creativity and innovation capacity. The Commission will draw on these activities to add to the impact of the Year.

4. LEGAL ELEMENTS OF THE PROPOSAL

4.1. Summary of the objectives of the action and the proposed measures

The overall objective of the European Year is to promote creativity for all as a driver for innovation and as a key factor for the development of personal, occupational, entrepreneurial and social competences through lifelong learning.

In keeping with the concept of lifelong learning endorsed by the Council Resolution on lifelong learning of 27 June 2002⁶, the promotion of creativity and a capacity for innovation will be tailored to all stages of lifelong learning, from early learning through compulsory and post-compulsory education and training, extending through working life to the post-retirement phase. It will apply to formal, non-formal and informal learning environments.

As in other European Years, measures will include information and promotion campaigns, events and initiatives at European, national, regional and local levels to convey key messages and disseminate information about examples of good practice. The Year will be implemented using existing Community programmes, in particular the Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013⁷ and the Culture Programme 2007-2013⁸, and other programmes and initiatives within

⁶ OJ C 163, 9.7.2002, p. 1.

⁷ Decision No 1720/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2006 (OJ L 327, 24.11.2006, p. 45): http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/index_en.html.

the priorities set for each instrument for the period including 2009⁹. Those priorities include sectorally targeted objectives such as: awakening and reinforcing creativity and innovation or developing innovative pedagogic approaches involving the creative arts and science in schools; promoting the “knowledge triangle” by establishing learning regions centred on universities as a driving force for regional development; supporting the development and transfer of innovation through vocational training; promoting adults’ personal fulfilment by developing their cultural awareness and capacity for creative expression and innovation via adult education; and, for all links in the lifelong learning chain, communication activities and events to disseminate and apply the results.

To ensure that the activities organised in the course of the Year are tailored to the needs and circumstances in each Member State and that the maximum impact is obtained from the lessons learned at European level, the Member States are invited to appoint a national coordinator responsible for organising their participation in the European Year of Creativity and Innovation where the national Lisbon Coordinator cannot usefully take over this role. A European steering group, including representatives of the national coordinators, will coordinate activities at European level.

4.2. Legal basis

The basis for this initiative is Articles 149 and 150 of the EC Treaty. These two articles are commonly coupled, in keeping with the lifelong learning approach which has been endorsed in many Community texts over more than a decade, including those mentioned in the recitals.

4.3. Principle of subsidiarity

This proposal is in keeping with the principle of subsidiarity, in the same way as the existing Lifelong Learning Programme, which will be an important vehicle for implementing the Year. As in that case, the objectives of the proposal cannot be achieved to a sufficient extent solely by action by the Member States, because action at national level alone would not benefit from the European dimension of exchanges of experience and good practice between Member States targeted on promoting key competences in the specific field of creativity and innovation.

The objectives of the proposal can be better achieved by Community action because European Years are typically designed to meet common challenges facing Europe by achieving critical mass through a combination of public awareness-raising and promoting policy debate.

4.4. Principle of proportionality

The course of action proposed is simple, relying on existing programmes and on refocusing communication activities on the themes of the Year, and imposes no disproportionate management constraints on administrations implementing it.

4.5. Choice of instrument

A decision of the European Parliament and of the Council is the most appropriate instrument to ensure the full involvement of the legislative authority in designing the Year.

⁸ Decision No 1855/2006/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 December 2006 (OJ L 372, 27.12.2006, p. 22).

⁹ http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/call08/prior_en.pdf.

5. BUDGETARY IMPACT

No additional funding is sought for the Year. The flexibility for setting priorities on an annual or multiannual basis in the Lifelong Learning Programme and other relevant programmes provides a sufficient financial margin to support an awareness-raising campaign on a scale similar to previous European Years. The administrative resources necessary to implement the Year can also be found within existing administrative budgets.