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INFORMATION NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Council

Subject: The Ljubljana Reading Manifesto
- Information from the Slovenian delegation

Delegations will find attached an information note from the Slovenian delegation on the above subject, which has been put on the agenda under ‘Any other business’ for the next Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting on 24 November 2023.

The Ljubljana Reading Manifesto

Information Note from the Slovenian Delegation

Societies are facing fundamental transformations as digital technologies are changing the ways we live, interact, work, study, and read. The social and cultural impact of the digitization process on reading skills and practices remains under-researched. While digital technologies offer much potential for new forms of reading, recent empirical research shows that the digital environment negatively impacts reading, particularly long-form reading and reading comprehension. It also remains unclear whether the transition to digital media actually lives up to its promise of improving learning outcomes. Recent studies of various kinds indicate a decline in crucial higher-level reading competencies and practices, such as critical and conscious reading, slow reading, non-strategic reading and long-form reading. Current educational policy, meanwhile, relies heavily on monocultural standardized testing of basic reading capabilities and on the growing use of digital technologies.

One of the pillars of the programme of Slovenia being an honorary guest at the Frankfurt Book Fair was the [Ljubljana Manifesto on Reading at a Higher Level](#). The Manifesto highlights the importance of book reading in the digital age. It highlights the fact that reading education, assessment, research and policy-making should focus more on higher-level reading practices in both adults and children in order to understand the development of reading skills and practices in an age increasingly dependent on a ubiquitous digital infrastructure. The Manifesto is not against the development of digital technologies but warns that human society will be worse off if people abandon reading more complex texts. It stresses the lifelong importance of reading at a higher level for critical thinking, which is a prerequisite for the successful functioning of a democratic society.

Furthermore, the future of reading affects the future of our societies. A democratic society, based on informed multi-stakeholder consensus, can only succeed with resilient readers, well-versed in higher-level reading. Policy-makers in all fields need to be aware of this. The Minister of Culture of the Republic of Slovenia, therefore, invites ministerial colleagues to support this important Manifesto by signing it.