Council of the European Union

Brussels, 17 November 2026
(OR. en)

15840/26

AUDIO 138
CULT 152
DIGIT 305
AG 188

NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	AOB for the meeting of the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council on 19 and 20 November 2026: European cultural sovereignty: from shared ambitions to concrete action *- Information from Bulgaria, Denmark, Germany, France, Poland, Portugal and Slovakia*

The past year has been marked by strong commitments from the Council of the European Union, the European Commission and the European Parliament, notably through the Joint declaration[1], the Culture Compass[2] and the European Democracy Shield[3], in favour of a long-term strategy for cultural policies and a stronger, more resilient, European democratic space. The 79th Festival de Cannes ministerial declaration and the recent Lumière Summit open commitments provided opportunities to highlight the major role of the cinema and audiovisual sectors in shaping our collective imaginations.

1 Joint declaration 'Europe for Culture - Culture for Europe' (C/2026/3440)
2 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions (COM(2025) 785 final): Culture Compass for Europe.
3 Joint communication to the European parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions (JOIN(2025) 791 final): European democracy shield: empowering strong and resilient democracies.

Our commitment to place culture at the heart of the European identity and democratic system for the benefit of all Europeans obliges us and must guide us in the decisions we face in the coming months. The issues and challenges faced by the cultural and creative sectors and the media ecosystem – notably an increased international competition, a rise in operating costs, geopolitical instability, digital transformation and the rise of artificial intelligence – demand that we reinforce the European cultural sovereignty.

Against this background, **our ambition can only be achieved through concrete commitments reflected in appropriate instruments, notably the following**:

On the one hand, this ambition requires a future-proof, sector-specific regulation for the audiovisual sector. As already underscored in the joint letter from eleven member states to Executive Vice-President Virkkunen, digital transformation is fundamentally reshaping the media landscape, affecting the viability and visibility of media services and the functioning of the media ecosystem as a whole and, ultimately, our ability, as Europeans, to produce and provide access to reliable information and diverse content and cultural works. The European Union must therefore act swiftly to ensure that its regulatory framework remains fit for purpose and continues to support cultural diversity and a strong, free, pluralistic and independent European media ecosystem. We consequently call for an ambitious revision of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive (AVMSD).

On the other hand, our political commitment to foster European cultural policies, that we reaffirm in the Council's work programme for culture, must be complemented by an enabling framework, primarily through the AgoraEU programme, commensurate with our shared ambition to build a strong, dynamic, resilient, diverse and independent ecosystem.

It is only by collectively making substantial and lasting commitments in the coming months – up to the challenges facing us and our ecosystems – that our political intentions will take shape and that we will be able to continue to promote culture and ensure that it serves as a common good that fosters the European Union unity, democracy, diversity and competitiveness.