

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council (EYCS)

26.11.2012 - 27.11.2012

**Location: Council of the European Union (Justus Lipsius building),
Brussels**

MINISTER PRESS CONFERENCE STATEMENTS

27 November 2012

Tuesday 27th November 2012

14:30 Press Conference (20 minutes)

Statement in Greek

Youth

Good day to everyone.

Allow me to welcome you to this second press conference of the Council concerning the works of the meeting for issues on Youth and Sports.

The Cyprus Presidency has put youth at the heart of its priorities. We sought to work towards a better Europe. A European Union which means more for its citizens and the world, a more effective Europe, to contribute to sustainable development, social cohesion and job creation through more efficient and integrated approaches. A Union that works on the basis of the principle of solidarity and with commitment for a better future. All efforts will continue to be directed to the younger generations so that they could inherit and live in a better Europe.

In the current context of the economic and financial crisis our young people all over Europe have been affected negatively. Issues such as social inclusion and participation of young people were high on the

agenda of our discussions throughout the work of the Presidency and the issues were part of the final conclusions of the current Council of EU Ministers for Youth Affairs. I also note the discussions we had yesterday at the Council of EU Ministers of Education where the issue of youth unemployment and the contribution of education in finding innovative solutions in improving employment prospects for young people took an important part of our work.

Today we have commenced our work with the established informal forum for structured dialogue with young people, over breakfast. This was attended, apart from the presidency, high level representatives from the Ministries of Denmark, Ireland, Lithuania, the Council Secretariat, the European Commission, the European youth Forum and the youth representatives of these Member States. Participants were asked to consider and discuss the findings and the challenges of the dialogue. The topic of discussion was the strengthening of participation in the process of the structured dialogue and the social inclusion of young people.

Following this we had the meeting of the Council of Ministers for Youth. The work on Youth Affairs has received broad acceptance by the Member States therefore the targets set by the Cyprus Presidency have been achieved. Specifically, the Council adopted the following texts, according to the objectives originally set:

1. Resolution on the review of the structured dialogue with young people on youth participation in democratic life in Europe.
2. Conclusions on the participation and inclusion of young people, focusing on those with an migrant background.

The views of young people themselves and of the youth organizations expressed through 14 joint recommendations that emerged from the European Youth Summit on 11 to 13 September in Nicosia, had contributed to the above two texts.

3. Joint report for 2012 of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018)

The EU report on youth in 2012, among others, presents new statistics on how the situation of young people in the European Union was affected from the economic crisis and argues for an interdisciplinary approach at all levels in the implementation of the renewed policy framework on youth.

The purpose of today's policy debate on Mobility and diversity: how to ensure the social integration?" was the exchange of views among Member States in order to come up with proposals for measures to strengthen policies to improve the social inclusion of all young people on the grounds of mutual understanding and respect.

SPORTS

I am particularly pleased because the Cyprus Presidency completes its cycle of work with two important meetings in the field of sports.

I wish to inform you that we had a very interesting meeting. Cyprus as the presiding country and in the presence of Commissioner Androulla Vassiliou and representatives of the Sports Movement, participated in an informal forum for structured dialogue on sport

The main topic of our discussion was the establishment of a "European Week of Sports" as an annual institution. We believe that the establishment of such an initiative would be a powerful tool for the orientation towards and awareness of European citizens in sport and physical activity. In addition to the benefits that will result in the improvement of public health, this will contribute to economic growth and employment in the Member States and the EU.

On this occasion I would like once again to thank everyone who participated and especially the representatives of the sport movement, for their very constructive suggestions and proposals that

support the efforts to implement the initiative for the establishment of the annual European Week of Sports.

At the Council meeting that follows, we will deal with important issues of sport which were promoted by the Cyprus presidency such as evidence-based sports policy, the fight against manipulation of results of sporting events, the latest developments in the field of dopping, improving health through physical activity and the establishment of the annual European Week of Sports. We look forward to an interesting and constructive debate which aims to create a better future for European sport in an effort to achieve a European dimension in sport.

I hope to have an equally productive afternoon as we did in all the previous meetings.

Closing my reference to the Council meetings I would like to take the opportunity, in this final press conference in Brussels, to thank all of my fellow ministers, the Commissioner Mrs Vassiliou, the European Commission and the Council Secretariat for the excellent cooperation we had throughout this period of the Cypriot Presidency.

I would, also, like to thank the translation department for its valuable contribution and mutual understanding. I also thank my colleagues in the Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus for their hard work for the successful organization of the Council.

Now, I am at your disposal for further questions.