Esports and video games

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The Committee on Culture and Education adopted an own-initiative report by Laurence FARRENG (Renew Europe, FR) on esports and video games.

The video game ecosystem has become a leading cultural and creative industry (CCI) all over the world with an estimated European market size of EUR 23.3 billion in 2021. Although this videogame and esports ecosystem has experienced strong structural growth, it still lacks the harmonised data, definitions and legal frameworks required to enable them to embrace their full potential.

Video games and esports: challenges, opportunities and a European strategy

Members called on the Commission and the Council to acknowledge the value of the video game ecosystem as a major CCI with strong potential for further growth and innovation. They called for the development of a coherent, long-term European video game strategy, which should benefit all actors involved fairly and adequately, while taking into account esports and the current dependence on imports and building on existing national strategies in order to support EU actors and EU start-ups in these sectors.

According to the report, the creation of a truly integrated European video game sector will require more video game productions and co-productions by European actors. It welcomed the fact that the Creative Europe and Horizon Europe programmes provide funding for the European video game sector, including research and innovation, through specific calls for tender with European added value. Members regretted, however, the **low amount of funding** committed so far, and the fact that the eligibility criteria are not always fit for the sector's needs, especially SMEs. They called, in this regard, for greater support and investment in research and development (R&D) and training to maximise game creation opportunities throughout all Member States and encourage the development of and retain European talent.

With a view to promoting and supporting the international trade and marketing of video games created in Europe, the Commission is called on to map and define the European video game industry and to consider creating a '**European Video Game' label**, as well as fostering other initiatives at a national and European level to improve the discoverability of video games and encourage the dissemination and recognition of video games created in Europe, including worldwide.

It is also proposed to create a **European Video Game Observatory** to support and provide decision-makers and stakeholders with harmonised data, assessments and concrete recommendations with a view to developing the sector.

Intellectual property (IP)

Members underlined that IP is central to video games and a key factor in growth and investment. It highlighted the need to develop a European strategy for video game IP, utilising both the creation of new and original IP and the promotion of existing European creations and IP.

Education and wellbeing

The report noted that video games have the ability to bring the school environment closer to pupils' everyday reality, in which video games often figure prominently. Indications that primary school teachers that have used video games in the classroom have in some cases observed a significant improvement in several key skills, such as **problem-solving and analytical, social and intellectual skills, spatial**

coordination, and teamwork, as well as better levels of concentration. esports can also be incorporated in education and contribute to the acquisition of digital competences and skills. In this regard, Members insisted that video games and esports can be a **valuable teaching tool** and called for better equipment and connectivity in schools.

According to the report, video games and esports can provide significant mental health benefits for many players and have the capacity to disseminate positive values, which should be pursued for the younger audience in particular.

Esports: fair competitive video gaming within a European framework

The report stated that esports and sport are different sectors, not least because the video games used for competitive gaming or esports are played in a digital environment and belong to private entities that enjoy full legal control and all exclusive and unrestricted rights over the video games themselves. The Commission is called on to develop a charter to promote European values in esports competitions, in partnership with publishers, team organisations, clubs and tournament organisers.

Members called on the EU to consider the creation of a **visa** for esports personnel based on the Schengen cultural and sports visas, applicable to all personnel involved in running and participating in esports competitions, and to consider measures to facilitate visa procedures to enable video game workers to come to the EU.

While highlighting that video games can be a social activity allowing users to socialise and spend time together, the EU should adopt a responsible approach to video games and esports by promoting them as **part of a healthy lifestyle** including physical activity, in-person social interaction and cultural engagement.