

All of Europe Reads to Kids" launching event

Poland, 1st June

Written message

I am very sorry that my diary commitments make it impossible for me to be with you in person today. But I would like very warmly to congratulate you on celebrating 10 years of the programme 'All of Poland Reads to Kids', which has been a very successful initiative to promote reading aloud to children. I also want to thank you for organizing the International Week of Reading to children in cooperation with the Czech Foundation 'Every Czech Reads to Kids'.

As you know, one in 5 pupils in the EU have inadequate reading skills. Reading aloud is one of the main approaches to motivate children to read. The European Commission addresses the importance of having good reading skills, as this is of utmost importance. People with limited basic skills not only risk being excluded from further education or training, but will also increasingly find themselves locked out of the labour market and society.

That is why the European Commission has set up a HLG of Experts on Literacy on the 1st of February 2011. Its task is to examine the most effective and efficient ways to improve reading skills in Europe. They will report to me next summer 2012.

I have also launched a Literacy campaign 'Europe loves reading'. This campaign is an awareness raising campaign to motivate children, adolescents and adults to read, this is complementary to the 'All of Europe Reads to Kids Programme'. You already share good practices, develop effective methods of promoting reading, how to select good books to be read to children, between countries cooperating in the 'All of Europe Reads to Kids' programme. I am delighted to see that a lot of action is already going on in the Member States.

I am sorry not to be able to join you today in this celebration; however I would like to wish you a very inspiring, fruitful and joyful day!

Androulla Vassiliou

European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth