



## Hot News EBLIDA newsletter on EU library & information society issues

February 2002

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### **Information sources used for this issue include:**

Bulletin Quotidien Europe

[Cordis](#)

[EUR-Lex](#): European Union law

[Europa](#) website

[European Parliament](#) Press Service

[European Voice](#)

[ISPO](#)

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EBLIDA encourages dissemination of our information. However, we would ask that the source be acknowledged. Documents are available at the EBLIDA Secretariat. For more information, contact Carmen Morlon, EU Information Officer, email: [morlon@nbic.nl](mailto:morlon@nbic.nl)

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## **Audiovisual**

### **Council resolution on the audiovisual sector published**

In Europe, the audiovisual sector (the sector) is characterised, from the cultural viewpoint by diversity and from the economic viewpoint, by the fragmentation of the internal market. With this in mind, the Council adopted on 21 January, a resolution on the development of the sector. The Council recommends that these characteristics be taken into account when implementing Community action, giving consideration not only to the cultural dimension, but also to competition policy and the industrial activity necessary for development.

The Commission and member states are invited to study measures to facilitate complementarity between the financial resources provided and to examine the potential for co-operation that would permit the exchange of knowledge and the formulation of long-term strategies for the

sector. In addition, member states are invited to co-operate with the Commission and the professionals in order to draw up an inventory of existing measures with regard to the deposit, recording and classification of audiovisual works and to develop means of co-operating and exchanging experience. Moreover, they are asked to examine the possibility of ratifying as soon as possible the Council of Europe Convention on the protection of the audiovisual heritage.

The resolution was published in the Official Journal of the European Communities, no 2002/C 32/04, p.4-6 of 5 February 2002, available from [EUR-Lex](#).

### **Results of the 2001 call for proposals under the MEDIA Plus programme**

The European Commission unit responsible for audiovisual policy has published the results of several 2001 call for proposals within the framework of the MEDIA Plus programme. Activities, projects and beneficiaries selected within the framework of the 2001 MEDIA Training; selected projects from calls no 5/2001 (individual projects and slate funding) and no 31/2001 (slate funding 2nd stage) (MEDIA Development) and the results of the calls for proposals no 50/2001 and no 22/2001 (MEDIA Distribution) can now be downloaded from: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/media/news.html>.



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## **Co-operation with third countries**

### **Parliament Memorandum of Understanding for the creation of an EU/Asian university**

On 30 January, MEP Dybkjaer and Osmar Faruk, Bangladesh minister for Education, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at creating an Asian university for women in Dacca (Bangladesh). The university is expected to open in September 2005 and take on around 2,000 students from Asia. Although MEP Dybkjaer raised the question on why Bangladesh and why a university only for women, she hoped for the university to become a true centre of excellence to serve as a model for Asia as a whole. Access by Asian women to higher education will allow them to play an active part in eliminating sex discrimination.

### **Commission Communication in preparation for the Euro-Mediterranean debate**

The Commission published on 13 February, a [communication](#) to put forward ideas for the Euro-Mediterranean ministerial meeting to be held in Valencia on 22 and 23 April 2002. The meeting will be an opportunity to take economic, social and cultural decisions that can achieve new levels of Euro-Mediterranean integration.

As regards dialogue between cultures and civilisations, the communication welcomes the work by the Spanish and Swedish presidencies to compile an inventory of existing and new EU, national and other activities in this domain. In addition, the Commission proposes the creation of a new EU-Mediterranean Foundation and to enhance the activities of the existing cultural Euro med programmes by launching new calls for proposals in due time. Moreover, the Commission is identifying ways to use the Culture 2000 and Media Plus programmes as well as other specific activities to foster intercultural dialogue.

As regards education, two new initiatives have been proposed: the extension of TEMPUS to the non-candidate Mediterranean partners and the opening of NETDAYS and eSchola activities to Mediterranean partners. With regard to information society, the Commission aims at furthering MEDA regional co-operation to information society (€ 20m) and Youth (€ 10m).

### **Czech Republic, Slovakia, Latvia, Estonia and Romania participation in Community**

## programmes

On 12 February, the ECOFIN Council agreed to adopt decisions on the general terms and conditions for the participation of the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Latvia and Estonia in Community programmes. For Hungary that same decision had already been taken on 17 December 2001 and for Slovenia on 22 January 2002. On 18 February, the General affairs Council agreed to adopt a decision on the general terms and conditions for the participation of Romania in Community programmes.

The framework decision is part of the enhanced pre-accession strategy. The new method should improve the present system, whereby participation in Community programmes is decided on a case-by-case basis, resulting in longer deadlines due to the adoption of specific Association Council decisions and entailing delays in concrete participation in programmes.

On the Community side, the specific terms and conditions for participation in each individual programme will be determined by the Commission in collaboration with the relevant authorities. Once the framework decisions are in force there will no longer be any need for ad hoc Association Council decisions. Three years after the entry into force of the framework decision and every three years thereafter, the Commission will submit to the Council an overall assessment of implementation of the decision, accompanied, if appropriate, by proposals.

### **MEDA regional strategy paper and indicative programme now available**

The [MEDA regional Strategy Paper](#) (the paper) for the 2002-2006 period and an indicative programme for 2002-2004 provide a strategic framework for programming the regional envelope of the EC's MEDA assistance programme. The paper focuses on promoting regional, sub-regional and cross-border co-operation between the EU and Mediterranean partners, and between the Mediterranean partners themselves. The paper puts forward a MEDA regional response along five priority areas, selected for their regional added-value: making the Euro-Med Free Trade Zone a reality; promoting regional infrastructure initiatives (telecommunications); the sustainability of Euro-Mediterranean integration (equal gender, education and training); enhancing the rule of law and good governance and bringing the partnership closer to the people (Euro-Med Audiovisual, Euro-Med Heritage, information and communication).

### **TACIS regional strategy paper and indicative programme now available**

With regard to TACIS, the [paper](#) was adopted by the Commission on 27 December 2001 and provides the strategic framework within which EC assistance to multi-country activities will be provided for the period 2002-2006. In addition, it sets out the indicative programmes for regional co-operation activities (2002-2003). The report highlights the programme objectives, expected results and conditionality in the priority fields of co-operation. Included are as well the indicative programme for the EC/EBRD Investment Preparation Facility and the indicative programme for ISTC (International Centre for Science and Technology) in Moscow and STCU (Science and technology Centre in Ukraine).



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## **Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights**

### **Commission warns some member states for failing implementation of lending rights directive**

The Council Directive 92/100/EEC of 19 November 1992 concerns the rental and lending rights and certain rights related to copyright in the field of intellectual property. The Commission decided on 4 February, to send Belgium a formal request, in the form of a reasoned opinion, that it implements into its national legislation the copyright provisions of this Directive as they apply to the public lending of works and other objects. There are certain provisions of this Directive

which Belgium has not implemented; therefore no payments are being made for lending in Belgium.

In addition, a reasoned opinion has been sent to Denmark asking it to amend its national regulations to bring them into line with the provisions of the same Directive. Denmark claims that the distribution right (Article 9(2)) can only be exercised if the object has been made ("fixed") within the European Economic Area (EEA - EU plus Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein). As a result, the distribution of objects such as CDs and videos, which are fixed outside the EEA, is beyond the control of the right holders when they are placed into circulation in Denmark.

If Belgium and Denmark do not give a fair response within two months, the Commission may refer them to the Court of Justice (the court) of the European Communities, as is the case for the UK, who has been referred to the court for not having fully implemented the Directive, which entered into force on 1 July 1994.

Details of current infringement procedures against all member states are available at: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat\\_general/sgb/droit\\_com/index\\_en.htm#infractions](http://europa.eu.int/comm/secretariat_general/sgb/droit_com/index_en.htm#infractions).

### **Commission workshop on digital rights management held**

The Commission held on 28 February in Brussels, a workshop on the promotion of open, flexible and interoperable Digital Rights Management Systems (DRMS) to which EBLIDA was invited to participate together with representatives of the content, information technology and consumer electronics industries, and other user and consumer associations. The workshop aimed at setting out different views on how to make DRMS acceptable to all market players and how to bring about co-operation between them.

DRMS are technologies that describe and identify digital content protected by intellectual property rights, and enforce usage rules set by right holders or prescribed by law for digital content. While digital technologies have transformed the copyright environment, digitisation has also increased the risk of piracy with the use of the same media to copy and distribute illegal perfect copies.

At European level, legal framework in which DRMS would be administered is set out in Directive 2001/29 on the harmonisation of copyright and related rights in the Information Society (the directive), to be implemented into national law by December. The directive supports the use of DRMS by protecting technical measures and by requiring member states to take into account the application or non-application of technological measures when providing for fair compensation in the context of the private use exception for which fair compensation is required. It also encourages interoperability and compatibility of different systems used in the protection of copyrighted material.

However, there are strongly divergent views among the different stakeholders on how to implement DRMS and on the requirements necessary to make them acceptable to right holders and consumers. Commissioners Liikanen and Bolkestein stated that the Commission is ready to bring DRMS into the 21st century and thus, prepared a staff working paper on *Digital rights: background, systems, assessment*, distributed at the workshop and available from: [http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/newsroom/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/newsroom/index_en.htm).



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## **Culture**

### **Culture ministers to hold a seminar on culture in the Treaties**

Almost 10 years on from the introduction into the Treaties of an article relating to culture, Culture ministers will hold an informal seminar on *Culture in the Treaties*, from 17 to 19 March in

Salamanca, Spain, in order to consider what the Article has achieved since its entry into force and to examine the problems involved in implementing it in the context of enlargement. Particular attention will be paid to Article 151(4), which requires cultural aspects to be taken into account in other Community policies. The internal mechanisms enabling this to happen will form part of the discussion.

It was the Maastricht Treaty (1992) that first introduced a specific article on culture into the Treaties. Article 128, whose five paragraphs laid down the areas, objectives and means of Community action along with the decision-making procedure. With only slight amendments to the text, the Treaty of Amsterdam maintained the EU's competence in cultural matters, always in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity. Community action began with the Kaleidoscope, Ariane and Raphael programmes. Upon completion, these programmes were replaced by the Culture 2000 (2000-2004) programme.

Another focus of particular attention will be the cultural content of the digital era and the application of ICT to cultural heritage. The EU needs to take initiatives to produce its own audiovisual digital content. This content will be transversal, so that the EU would have a single digital terminal giving access to all types of service - voice, data and Internet. The alliance between Europe and Latin America is fundamental in this respect, as is the development of programmes such as eEurope, eContent and @LIS.

### **EFAH initiative to bring culture into the Convention debates**

EFAH, the European Forum of Arts and Heritage, held a meeting in October 2001 to which EBLIDA was invited to present its views on how libraries fail under European cultural policies. The meeting aimed at discussing cultural NGOs in the view of the next EU institutional reform (2001-2004). As a first step, EFAH organised a workshop on culture at the Civil Society Forum, held in Laeken in December 2001, and launched a forum in order to gather as many cultural players as possible and to bring together their views in order to convince politicians to take culture into account in the Convention debates. These debates will be held until 2003 in preparation of the next Intergovernmental Conference. For further information and participation at the forum visit: <http://www.efah.org/>.

### **Parliament report on implementation of Culture 2000 adopted**

On 28 February, Parliament adopted a resolution by MEP Graça (A5-0019/2002) reaffirming the political relevance of the objectives of the Culture 2000 programme, namely that of improving access to and participation in cultural activities for as many citizens as possible. MEPs stress that it is important for Mediterranean countries to be involved in the programme.

Parliament regrets however, that there has been poor management of the programme within a limited budget. It also believes that the 5% threshold on contributions delays the implementation of projects, particularly in applicant countries. There is a call for a more flexible approach. Looking to the future, MEPs want the Commission to evaluate the former Raphael, Ariane and Kaleidoscope programmes to see whether or not creating a single programme shaped any significant added value. The full report can be downloaded from [http://www.europarl.eu.int/plenary/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.eu.int/plenary/default_en.htm), under latest reports.



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## **eCommerce**

### **Information on European eCommerce legislation available**

eLexPortal.com provides current information on legislative and regulatory matters with regard to eCommerce across the EU. The portal presents eCommerce legislation and policies in a user-friendly way and provides user-tailored answers. Access to <http://www.elexportal.com> is currently free of charge.

## Commission consultation on SMEs and eCommerce launched

Within the framework of the *Go Digital initiative*, the Commission launched on 15 February, an open consultation on benchmarking national and regional policies in support of eBusiness for SMEs. With it, the Commission intends to identify examples of good governmental practices in specific policy areas. As a result of the first phase, a synthesis report was completed on 7 February. The assessment of these policies should be completed by June 2002. Then, a conference will be organised by the end of June to present the results of the benchmarking initiative and to launch a debate on possible targets and quantitative indicators for eBusiness-related enterprise policy. In addition, a discussion on the results will be held by Industry ministers in November this year.

Contributions with relevant annexes (recent reports, studies, articles, memos, etc.) should be sent no later than 31 March 2002 to [entr-e-business-benchmarking@cec.eu.int](mailto:entr-e-business-benchmarking@cec.eu.int). Further information on the consultation plus access to the synthesis report can be found at: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/ict/policy/cons-benchmarkar-nebp.htm>.

## ECOFIN Council gives political agreement on VAT on eCommerce

On 12 February, the ECOFIN Council gave its political agreement to the Commission proposal on the application of VAT to digital products (amending Directive 77/388/EEC). The rules will apply to the supply over electronic networks of software and computer services generally, plus information and cultural, artistic, sporting, scientific, educational, entertainment or similar services. The new legislation will ensure that when these services are supplied for consumption within the EU, they are subject to EU VAT, and when these services were supplied for consumption outside the EU, they are exempt from VAT. Formal adoption however, is only possible once the text has been translated into all EU official languages.

The US has objected to the proposed text, as it believes that this measure may contravene the undertakings of neutrality and fairness in eCommerce taken in the framework of the OECD and also reveal itself to be incompatible with WTO requirements.

With regard to the Regulation that establishes the procedures for co-operation between member states' VAT authorities (amending Regulation EEC 218/92), the Council can only adopt it after Parliament's opinion which is pending after the Council decided to change the legal basis of the regulation from Article 95 (qualified majority voting) to Article 93 (unanimity). For further information

visit: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/taxation\\_customs/taxation/ecommerce/vat\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/taxation_customs/taxation/ecommerce/vat_en.htm).



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## Education

### Lifelong learning results on consultation process available

The Commission DG EAC made available on 20 February, the results of the Europe-wide consultation on the memorandum on lifelong learning. National reports, Parliament, Economic and Social Committee (ESC), the Committee of the Regions (CoR), European social partners and civil society contributions as well as other contributions and round tables are now available at:

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/life/report\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/life/report_en.html).

### Education issues formally adopted



Following the Education Council in November 2001, Education ministers formally adopted on 14 February:

- the resolution on the promotion of **linguistic diversity and language learning**;
- the Council opinion regarding **education and training** issues within the **employment policy guidelines for 2002**;
- after the conclusions on the **follow-up report on the future objectives of education and training systems**, a joint Commission/Council report, containing a detailed work programme was adopted and will be submitted to the Barcelona summit for approval on 15 and 16 March. Work already begun on the basic skills, ICT and mathematics, science and technology. The aim now is to start work on the ten other areas by 2003 at the latest. On its part, Parliament adopted on 6 February, the resolution by MEP Martens (A5-0017/2002) on education and training systems;
- a resolution on the **added value of voluntary work**.

### **Education ministers debate on lifelong learning**

On 14 February, Education and Youth ministers held an exchange of views on the Commission communication on *Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality* (November 2001). Member states, Council and Commission were called on to draw up, each within their own sphere of competence, coherent strategies and practical measures to make lifelong learning accessible to all (Feira 2000). The main principles and proposals of the communication are to be endorsed by EU ministers for education, youth, employment and social policy in the first half of 2002, after it has been considered by Parliament, the Council of Ministers, the ESC and the CoR. The subject is of particular importance for the preparation of the Barcelona European Council in March.

Education ministers commented on a large number of points in the Commission document, while the Youth ministers concentrated more particularly on non-formal education. Although the Commission priorities were deemed important, several member states saw a European added value, especially in terms of the valuing of knowledge and its recognition beyond national borders.

The Spanish Presidency intends to draw up two documents on the basis of the interventions made - a document summarising the member states' various positions, which would be forwarded to Barcelona, and a text for submission to the next Education Council meeting on 30 May, which would cover the latest lifelong learning measures.

As for Parliament, the draft report, to be dealt with under the Hughes Procedure together with the Employment committee, is awaiting Parliament consultation after the Culture committee decided on 23 January to postpone the discussion, seeing that MEP O'Toole (rapporteur) was standing in for MEP van Brempt (rapporteur on the Commission Memorandum on lifelong learning).

### **Commission action plan on skills and mobility adopted**

The Commission DGs on Education, Employment and Internal market adopted on 13 February, an action plan on basic skills and mobility, which aims at promoting workers' mobility. It draws on existing initiatives, notably the Communication on *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a reality*.

The action plan seeks to remove barriers within the European labour markets by 2005 to make them more widely accessible. It presents specific proposals for more uniform, transparent and flexible arrangements for recognition of qualifications, diplomas and periods of study. To that end, the action plan proposes 25 specific measures, 15 of which relate to education and training in particular e.g. a model European curriculum vitae to be used on a voluntary basis and elaborated in co-operation with member states and social partners, which will be available from March at: <http://www.cedefop/transparency/cv> . The action plan, to be forwarded to Parliament for its opinion (Hughes Procedure), can be downloaded from: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/news/2002/feb/ap\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2002/feb/ap_en.html).



## **Parliament report on the implementation of Socrates adopted**

On 28 February, Parliament adopted a resolution by MEP Pack (A5-0021/2002) welcoming steps taken by the Commission to improve the monitoring and evaluation of the Socrates programme. MEPs regret however, management weaknesses, which have led to delays, and there is a call on the Commission to improve the situation. In particular, Parliament wants to see the rules relating to co-financing abolished for small grants of less than € 20,000. The House also wants to see more decentralisation, better co-operation with national agencies and simplified procedures to improve efficiency. The full report can be downloaded from [http://www.europarl.eu.int/plenary/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.eu.int/plenary/default_en.htm), under latest reports.

Furthermore, the Commission intends to present in March, a proposal to amend the Socrates Decision (253/2000/EC) to prevent significant increase in bureaucratic burden of beneficiary institutions (art.149, 150).

## **Commission proposal to extend TEMPUS to Mediterranean countries adopted**

The Commission DGs on Education and External relations jointly adopted on 6 February, a draft Decision to extend the TEMPUS programme to Mediterranean third countries to encourage co-operation in university exchanges. The Commission proposes to add a new objective relating to the development of democratic civic societies to those of TEMPUS III that are currently in force. In addition, it proposes to prolong the TEMPUS III decision until 2006, thus aligning it on the other Community programmes in this area such as Socrates and Leonardo. The draft text also provides for researchers to be included among those eligible under the programme.

The current Tempus will be extended to Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, the Palestinian authority, Syria and Lebanon and funded under the MEDA programme with €21.5m (2003) and €21.5m (2004). Further information on the Tempus programme can be found at: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/ceeca/tacis/ap2000\\_tempus.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/ceeca/tacis/ap2000_tempus.pdf).



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## **Information Society**

### **eEurope 2002 benchmarking report adopted**

The Commission adopted on 5 February, the 2002 eEurope benchmarking report, which provides the latest results of the eEurope benchmarking exercise, providing measurement of all indicators defined by the Internal market Council last November. It also provides the first analysis of the results and draw recommendations for policy development and consideration as to what further action is necessary to realise the goal of the Lisbon Summit (March 2000) to make the EU the most dynamic knowledge-based economy.

The communication proposes to the Council and Parliament to adopt a decision on a multi-annual support programme for '*open method of co-ordination in the information society - benchmarking, monitoring, best practices*'. The eEurope action plan requires to monitor and to benchmark activities in member states. Up to now benchmarking, monitoring, and identifying best practices have been financed through a modified Promise programme. The Promise programme will end this year, therefore the Commission proposes a multi-annual programme to ensure that benchmarking and monitoring activities are financed beyond 2002.

The report (COM (2002)62fin, 5 February 2002) is available, in all the official languages of the EU, from: [http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/eeurope/news\\_library/documents/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/news_library/documents/index_en.htm).

### **eEurope action plan to be extended up to 2005**

Telecommunication ministers examined on 22 February, the impact of the eEurope 2002 action

plan. The general impression was that although important achievements have been made, much remains to be done to meet the Lisbon objectives. This would be the task of a new eEurope 2005 Action Plan, to which ministers gave unanimous backing. A request will now be made to the Barcelona summit to confirm the programme's prolongation and to give more impetus to information society policies.

Member states and the Commission were asked to monitor national and European regulatory initiatives that impact on eCommerce, and identify factors that prevent enterprises from maximising the potential of ICT. Ministers also called to give priority to eBusiness and eLearning; the development of broadband Internet services; access to electronic services e.g. eGovernment, eHealth for the elderly and the disabled; better pan-European co-operation in the area of network security and the widespread use of eSignatures.

Furthermore, ministers called for moves to include an international dimension in the extended action plan. Further information on eEurope can be found at:

[http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/eeurope/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/index_en.htm).



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## Internal Market

### Commission drafted regulation for the implementation of Community Design

Following the adoption of the Community Design Regulation in December 2001, the Commission presented to the Council on 11 February, a draft proposal for a regulation to implement it. The regulation is to be discussed under the Comitology procedure. Its purpose is to provide the Office for the Harmonisation in the Internal Market (the office) with the legal and administrative tools necessary for the registration of Community designs. The regulation should be adopted by summer 2002 to allow the office make the necessary preparations when from next year, accepting applications for registered Community designs.



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## Internet

### Protection of minors best achieved through self-regulation by audiovisual industries

On 19 February, the Culture committee adopted its position on the Commission report on the application of *the 1998 Council recommendation on the protection of minors and human dignity*, in the form of a non-legislative report by MEP Beazley (A5-0037/2002), which will be submitted to the second April plenary session. The full report can be downloaded from [http://www.europarl.eu.int/plenary/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.eu.int/plenary/default_en.htm) , under latest reports.

With reference to the action plan to promote safer use of the Internet, adopted in 1999 as a follow-up to the Council recommendation, the Culture committee calls on the member states to set up hotlines to handle complaints about illegal or harmful content. Greater co-operation at European and international levels to combat illegal content is needed in the implementation of the recommendation as is the involvement of consumer groups, voluntary associations and NGOs.

### Commission communication on IPv6 priorities published

The Commission adopted on 21 February, a Communication on *IPv6 Priorities for Action*, which calls for a European action plan to accelerate the rollout of Internet Protocol version 6 (IPv6) - a key technology for the next generation Internet. Unless action is taken, space on the current

generation of the Internet is projected to be exhausted by around 2005. Moreover, future Internet developments such as wireless machine-to-machine communications, mobile computing and third generation (3G) telephony will put an even greater strain on these limited resources.

In the context of the draft FP6, which provides for a financial allocation of Euro 3.6 billion for the IST programme, the Commission proposes to place emphasis on the aspects linked to the deployment of Ipv6 - fixed wide band and cordless infrastructures; interoperability and advanced infrastructures e.g. GEANT, GRIDs. It also suggests the elaboration of an action plan to develop the new protocol and the tools, devices and elements of the network.

### **Safer use of Internet action plan to be extended**

The Commission is soon to adopt a communication proposing the Council and Parliament to adopt a Decision amending Decision no 276/1999/EC on the multi-annual Community action plan on promoting safer use of the Internet.

Actions under the present programme, which will end this year, include so far over 20 pilot projects in the areas of hotlines, public awareness, filtering and rating systems, as well as assistance to emerging bodies in the EU. A meeting was held in Luxembourg on 29 January, to present the projects funded under action line 'filtering and rating'. A total of 13 projects have been funded under this action line, available from the website at: [http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/programmes/iap/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/programmes/iap/index_en.htm).



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## **Social Policy**

### **Parliament calls for a Green Paper on illiteracy**

On 7 February, Parliament adopted the resolution by MEP Hermange (A5-0009/2002), by 367 to 1 with 6 abstentions, on illiteracy and social exclusion. The resolution calls on the Commission, in connection with the employment guidelines, the open methods of co-operation used in the fight against poverty and exclusion and in relation to education and training, to propose specific indicators and benchmarks relating to illiteracy. This should be done in close co-operation with all the social players. It also requests that the Commission submits to Parliament and Council, as soon as possible, a Green Paper on illiteracy, innumeracy and social exclusion, together with a timetable for tangible objectives along the lines of the social agenda, defining measures to be taken at European level.

Of interest to libraries, these measures include "*the promotion at local, regional and national level of initiatives such as mobile libraries and learning support and of any initiative which would help those who cannot read to learn to do so, irrespective of their financial status and with a particular view to facilitating their integration into society*". When it comes to action by member states, particular care should be taken to promote "*the mobile library and learning support initiatives proposed by associations at local level*". The resolution also calls on the Commission to include literacy projects in any European Year of books or reading and to develop and maintain literacy through the Socrates, Leonardo and Youth programmes as well as the Structural Funds. The full report can be downloaded from [http://www.europarl.eu.int/plenary/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.eu.int/plenary/default_en.htm), under latest reports.



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## **Telecommunications**

## Council of ministers adopted the Telecom package

On 14 February, the Council approved in the form of amended common positions and in accordance with Article 251(3) of the Treaty the *Framework Directive*, with Portugal abstaining in respect of the amendments; the *Access Directive*; the *Authorisation Directive*; the *Universal Directive* and the *Radio Spectrum Decision*.

The Council adopted common positions on the four abovementioned Directives on 17 September 2001 and a common position on the Radio Spectrum Decision on 16 October 2001. At its meeting on 12 December 2001, Parliament adopted at second reading a number of amendments to the Council common positions on each of the five legislative acts. Member states have now fifteen months to transpose the directives into national law. Parliament and Council are still to agree on the draft directive on data privacy. The Commission will soon present a series of measures linked to implementation of the new package. Further information can be found at: [http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/topics/telecoms/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/topics/telecoms/index_en.htm).



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## Trade Policy

### WTO Decision on FSC postponed

The Geneva verdict on the amount of sanctions that the EU is entitled to impose on US trade in the Foreign Sales Corporations (FSC) issue will now be given on 29 April contrary to the original deadline (March). According to Washington, there should be an annual ceiling of \$956m on the trading value of exports, which represents less than a quarter of the injury invoked by Europeans.

The US will focus on the 'disproportionate' nature of the amount when both parties meet in Geneva on 7 March. The US believes that the nature of the amount proceeds from the sum of illegal subsidies granted to *Made in America* exports in 2000. In addition, the US wants the amount to reflect the estimated impact that the American provision has on European trade – then, the right figure would be based on the European share of the non-American market which is affected – that is 26.8% excluding other parameters. Finally, this would mean that, according to the US, the amount of tax relief to exports for the reference year is \$3.89 billion instead of the \$4,043 billion claimed by Europeans. Sums obtained by service experts should also be deducted from such amount.



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## Youth Policy

### Education ministers debate on the Youth White Paper

In its White Paper on Youth (November 2001), the Commission proposes to set up a new EU framework for co-operation in youth policy. Such co-operation will take its inspiration from existing national and Community activities, but will also be based on the 'open method of co-ordination' and take into account the youth dimension in the development of policies.

The Education ministers adopted on 14 February, operational conclusions which provide for setting up a follow-up strategy in terms of procedure and working methods. During the discussion, ministers raised the priorities which should be adopted, working methods, and the question of participation by candidate countries and young people themselves in this process. In its conclusions, the Council undertakes to pursue work towards drawing up a framework

(common goals, timetable, working methods and follow-up) for co-operation in youth affairs with a view to adoption at the Education Council meeting on 30 May 2002. The Council conclusions are available from: <http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/newmain.asp?lang=1>, under Council and then, Education.

### **Parliament resolution on Youth programme adopted**

On 28 February, Parliament approved a resolution by MEP Gröner (A5-0019/2002) welcoming the successful implementation of the Youth programme in the year 2000, which contributes to promoting mutual understanding amongst young people from 30 participating countries.

A sum of € 520m had been allocated to the programme for 2000. There is criticism however, of the failure of the programme to attract a sufficient number of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and young immigrants. Parliament is calling for improved co-operation between the Commission and national agencies responsible for paying out the funds with a view to speeding up payments. MEPs also want to see a reduction of red tape and an improvement in administrative procedures. The full report can be downloaded from [http://www.europarl.eu.int/plenary/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.eu.int/plenary/default_en.htm), under latest reports.



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