



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

May 2002

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

Bulletin Quotidien Europe  
[Cordis](#)  
[Council Press Office](#) Newsroom  
[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@nblc.nl](mailto:morlon@nblc.nl)

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## **Audiovisual**

### **European Cinema Heritage Week to be launched**

The Commission has launched an initiative to target European citizens, particularly young people, concerning image education and European cinema. **CINEd@ys 2002** will be organised around two events – the [European Cinema Heritage Week](#) in more than 50 European towns from 15 to 24 November 2002, and **NetD@ys 2002** – Image, an annual initiative on new IT which will take place from 18 to 24 November 2002. The European Cinema Heritage Week will consist of a programme of major European cinema films in cinemas and film libraries, with special showings organised, particularly for schools. The week will include:

- mobilisation of the European networks of film libraries and of the Europa Cinémas network in approximately 50 European cities. Professionals will play an active part in the week by talking about films, explaining their work and sharing their passion with the public;
  - encouragement for a similar mobilisation of European public/private-sector TV e.g. special evenings organised to mark European Cinema Heritage Week;
  - a series of measures in schools with encouragement and support from education ministers. Measures may include e.g. cinema-related games, a competition for short films;
- close co-operation with Netd@ys 2002.



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### Seminar on aspects relating to preservation of audiovisual works held

A seminar entitled '[Monitoring of the Cinema Communication on the Future of the Film and Audiovisual Industry: aspects relating to Heritage Preservation, Digital Cinema, Cinematographic Education and the Rating of Films](#)' was held in Seville on 6 and 7 May. Organised by the Spanish Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, with the support of the European Commission, the seminar focused on specific legal aspects connected with cinematographic works and other productions in the audiovisual sector. The seminar served to develop such issues connected with the sector, through the input of institutional representatives, European Union cinema authorities, the heads of Film Libraries and Archives in Europe, directors, producers, distributors and exhibitors.

One of the conclusions states that: 'The archives of audiovisual works, preserved in **European film libraries** and television **archives**, taken overall, constitute for our society a cultural heritage of great importance, comparable to other **archives and museums** shaping the cultural heritage of Europe'. A need for joint interventions at national and European level on preservation, restoration and valorisation of European Cinema was therefore identified.



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### Council debate on Television without Frontiers directive

On 23 May, Culture and audiovisual ministers held a debate on the Television without Frontiers directive, which will undergo revision by the end of this year. The debate focused on the experience gained in the implementation of the directive, the main challenges for national and European audiovisual law and the developments in national legislation concerning the sector.

Most of the interested parties which the Commission consulted said that, of the possible options, they would prefer to establish a work programme with a view to amending the directive at a later stage, approach which also received wide support from the delegations. In the course of the current assessment, the Commission has initiated studies on technological and market developments in the sector, new advertising techniques and the effects of the

measures to encourage the distribution and production of European works.



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### **Eight films backed by Media Plus programme in Cannes**

Eight films funded by the [Media Plus](#) programme were selected for the 2002 Cannes Film Festival, which opened on 15 May. The films funded for their development are *Russian Ark* (Germany), *Carnages* (France), *Heremakono*, *En attendant le bonheur* (France), and *Respiro* (Italy). *Sweet Sixteen* (UK), *L'adversaire* (France), *Marie-Jo et ses two amours* (France) and *Hundstage* (Netherlands) were supported by the Media programme for their distribution.

On 24 May, Commissioner Reding awarded the 2002 EU Media Prize Award to *No Man's Land* by young Belgian-Bosnian director Danis Tanovic. The EU Media Prize Award (€25,000) is awarded to the first or second feature film of a young director which has been most widely distributed outside its country of origin and which distribution has been funded by the Media Plus programme. *No Man's Land* has recently received several awards, notably an Oscar. So far, the film has been distributed in Spain, Finland, France, Greece, Iceland, the Netherlands and Sweden as well as Belgium, its country of production and it has been seen by nearly 500 000 people in Europe.



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### **Eight candidate countries to participate in the Media Plus programme**

The European Commission adopted on 17 May, a series of decisions for eight candidate countries to participate in the [Media Plus](#) programme. From end of this year or 2003, **Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland** and the **Slovak Republic** will be able to receive aid for training, the development, distribution and promotion of their audiovisual works. The programme will also be extended to **Slovenia** and to other candidate countries to make it easier for European works to circulate between the EU and candidate countries.

Each new country participating in Media will make a financial contribution to the programme, partly through its national budget and the rest via the PHARE programme. The procedures to follow in the candidate countries for participation will be the same as those for the member states.

This has been received as good news short after a study by the European Audiovisual Observatory revealed a low level of distribution of Central and Eastern European films in the EU (between 1996 and 2001, only 42 films were distributed in at least one member state).



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## **Books and Reading**

### **Parliament resolution calls for a directive on the fixing of book prices**

On 16 May, Parliament adopted the resolution on the fixing of book prices by MEP Rothley (A5-0039/2002). In its resolution, Parliament calls on the Commission to submit, by the end of

2002, a proposal for a directive, under the co decision procedure, on the fixing of book prices. The resolution also makes detailed recommendations about the main points to be contained in the directive. Following a complaint from an Austrian firm, the Commission decided in spring 2000 that the cross-border fixing of book prices was incompatible with EU competition law. There was, however, no objection to a national system on a statutory basis, given the member states' competencies in the area of cultural policy. Nevertheless, MEPs fear that even such national systems might be at risk as they can be undermined by imports, exports/re-imports or Internet sales, hence the need for legislation at Community level.

According to the report, the directive should give every member state the right to introduce or maintain fixed price systems for books in its territory. MEPs further say that fixed price systems should provide for discounts for certain user groups, for example **libraries**, bookshops, **schools**, students or subscribers. Member States may determine the user groups entitled to a discount and the level of permissible discount on the retail price and also provide for other discounts.

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. Further information on legislation applying to books can be found at: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/livre\\_reglement\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/livre_reglement_en.htm).



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## Europeans and culture, Eurobarometer survey results available

The main findings of a study carried out between 22 August and 27 September 2001 among 16 162 people as part of Eurobarometer 56.0 present an analysis of European participation in cultural activities. With regard to reading, the study concludes that:

- northern Europeans read more books than southern Europeans - Sweden (80%), Finland (75%) and the UK (74%), the lowest percentages found in Portugal (32%), Greece (45%) and Spain (47%);
- nearly half of the European population read newspapers every day – again the proportion is higher in Finland and Sweden (78%) and lower in Greece (20%), Spain (25%) and Portugal (25%). In addition, a higher percentage of people in the latter countries stated that they never read newspapers;
- over 60% of Europeans read magazines at least once a month. On the other hand, almost 20% never read magazines.

The three most popular European cultural activities are going to the cinema (Spaniards and Irish the most), **visiting the library** (Finland scores the highest interest in libraries) and historical monuments. A summary of the study is available from the [Eurostat](#) website, under General Statistics, population and social conditions.



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## Consumer protection

### Commission consultation on Rome II launched

The European Commission launched on 3 May, a consultation on a preliminary [draft proposal](#) for a Council Regulation which aims at harmonising the rules with respect of the law applicable to non-contractual obligations (**Rome II**). This initiative is part of the work under progress within the EU in order to develop a genuine area of freedom and justice. Its objective is to ensure that courts of all member states apply the same law to cross-border disputes on non-contractual obligations, thus facilitating the mutual recognition of judicial decisions throughout

the EU.

The jurisdiction of courts and the recognition and enforcement of judgements given in another member state are already subject of Council Regulation no 1347/2000 (29 May 2000), which applies to both contractual and non-contractual obligations. In addition, the present initiative will complete the harmonisation at Community level of private international law rules with respect to civil and commercial obligations. Consultation will take place until **15 September 2002**. Contributions should be sent to [JAI-coop-jud-civil@cec.eu.int](mailto:JAI-coop-jud-civil@cec.eu.int).



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## Co-operation with third countries

### Parliament resolution on TEMPUS III adopted

Parliament adopted on 14 May (first reading), a resolution drafted by MEP Ojeda Sanz (A5-0127/2002) on extension of the Tempus III programme to include Mediterranean partner countries. With a view to fostering dialogue and co-operation among partner countries, several amendments seeking to widen the range of participants, promote recognition of qualifications and clarify funding were tabled. According to the report, the range of participants should be extended beyond the traditional academic community to enable political leaders and civil society to play a role in the development of the programme.

The programme is set to run from 2003 to 2006 with a budget of some € 106.75m to come from existing funding earmarked for MEDA. The proposed resolution is now awaiting final decision/signature. 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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### Scientific and technological co-operation between the EC and Chile signed

General Affairs ministers adopted on 13 May, a decision authorising the signature, on behalf of the European Community, of the Agreement for scientific and technological co-operation between the Community and the Republic of Chile. This agreement, to be concluded for an initial period of five years, is aimed at encouraging, developing and facilitating cooperative research and development activities in science and technology fields of common interest between the Community and Chile.



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### Parliament report on scientific/technological co-operation between the EC and India adopted

Parliament adopted on 14 May, the report by MEP Khanbhai (A5-0137/2002) on the conclusion of the agreement for scientific and technological co-operation with India under which Indian scientists will be able to take part in EU research programmes and vice versa. The rapporteur

has singled out HIV/AIDS, renewable energy and food processing as areas of mutual benefit to both continents. The proposed agreement is awaiting final decision/signature.



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## Copyright and Intellectual property rights

### The IPR Helpdesk is back

The [Intellectual Property Rights \(IPR\) Helpdesk](#) began life in 1998 as a pilot action of the Commission's DG Enterprise to provide research contractors with assistance on IP issues. The pilot phase run for three years, finishing at the end of August 2001. The [re-launched IPR Helpdesk](#) aims at making the process of protecting and exploiting the results of their work much easier. The new operational phase, officially launched at the beginning of this year, is currently co-ordinated by the University of Alicante (Spain) and co-financed by the European Commission as an accompanying measure. The website, available in five languages, is scheduled to be fully functional by the end of June this year and will employ the [www.uaipit.com](http://www.uaipit.com) database, which contains IPR documents from all over the world.



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## Culture

### Council Resolution on a new work plan in the field of culture adopted

Ministers for Cultural Affairs adopted on 23 May, a resolution on a new work plan in European co-operation in the field of culture. In its resolution, Council stresses the need for a more coherent approach to action at Community level in the field of culture and believes that co-operation should be improved by creating a structured framework with a work plan for discussions of priority topics of common interest and, where appropriate, the creation of new strategies. It also stresses the need for an effective synergy with all other relevant areas and actions of the Community.

According to the resolution, the Commission is to prepare a work plan which takes into account the cultural aspects under other provisions of the Treaty so that the implementation of Article 151(4) is ensured. In addition, it will have an indicative and non-exhaustive list of priority topics to be considered during the next few Presidencies. The work plan should be taken forward by the successive Presidencies, in cooperation with the Commission. Successive Presidencies should informally agree the areas from the indicative list that each Presidency shall address in the lifetime of the work plan and then, present the outcome of its activities by the end of its period in office, with an indicative date for completion of the work not later than 2004. The work plan will include, without prejudice to other topics, the following: European added value; access to and visibility of cultural action of the European Community; horizontal aspects; dialogue among cultures; co-operation between member states and participation of new member states; and International co-operation in the field of culture. Other areas of co-operation could periodically be taken into account. The resolution should be adopted at a forthcoming meeting, once the text is finalised.



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### Council decision to extend Culture 2000 to 2006 adopted

Culture ministers decided on 23 May, to extend the Culture 2000 Programme to 2006. This will ensure that the next programme functions better, without interfering with Parliament elections in 2004, the constitution of a new Commission and the approval of a new financial perspective. The Council was informed of the Commission's intentions regarding the future of the programme and held a discussion on the subject. The President would like the Commission to take delegations' suggestions into account in its further work. Most delegations supported the extension of the programme until 2006 so that detailed consideration could be given to preparing further proposals for the future of European cultural co-operation beyond 2006.

There was, nevertheless, a call for certain defects which had become apparent in the current programme to be eliminated; the Commission felt it would be able to remedy them by changing certain aspects of the implementation of the programme without referring the matter to the Council and the European Parliament.



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### Conference on Connect initiative held

The [Connect](#) initiative was concluded with a conference in Brussels on 15 and 16 April. The conference aimed at presenting the projects' results as well as the external evaluation of this initiative. The event was organised by the Commission's DG Education and Culture with participants from the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions. The Connect initiative was adopted by the European Parliament in 1999 with a budget of € 15 million. It aimed at establishing links between education, training, culture, innovation and new technologies. A selection of some 40 projects of a total of 92 was present.



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## eCommerce

### Council directive and regulation on VAT applied on electronic services adopted

ECOFIN Council ministers adopted on 7 May, a Directive amending and amending temporarily Directive 77/388/EEC as regards the value added tax arrangements applicable to radio and TV broadcasting services and certain electronically supplied services ([OJ](#) no 2002/L 128/ of 15 May 2002, p. 41). The directive applies to website supply, supply of software, supply of images, text and information, music, films and games and supply of distance teaching. Where the supplier of a service and his customer communicates via electronic mail, this shall not of itself mean that the service performed is an electronic service (article 9 (2) (e)). The directive has to be transposed into all member states' law by 1 July 2003 and will apply for three years before it is reviewed.

In addition, the Council adopted a Regulation amending temporarily (EEC no 218/92 on administrative co-operation in the field of indirect taxation (VAT) as regards additional measures regarding electronic commerce ([OJ](#) no 2002/L 128/ of 15 May 2002, p. 1).



## Education

### CEDEFOP survey results on eLearning initiative published

On 8 May, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational training (Cedefop) released the 2001 results of an online survey carried out in 2001 on the [European Training Village](#) (ETV) website. eLearning was assigned a key role by the Lisbon Summit in March 2000. Among the issues addressed were the type and size of organisations involved in eLearning; whether they are providers or users of eLearning or both; the importance of eLearning in relation to classroom tuition; the use of eLearning in different subject areas; the amount spent on eLearning compared to other forms of training over the last three years and the revenue earned by providers over the same period.

The conclusions provide an insight into the nature of eLearning and the way that it is developing. Visit [http://publications.eu.int/flash/nfeu\\_en.htm](http://publications.eu.int/flash/nfeu_en.htm) for further information (ISBN 92-896-0106-X).



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### Commission report on European training pathways adopted

The European Commission adopted on 3 May, a report on the European training pathways initiative, which came into operation in 2000. The initiative is designed to promote the mobility of persons in training, improve employment prospects for young people and raise the quality and attractiveness of vocational education. These pathways allow persons undergoing work-linked training to do a period of training in another member state. A Europass Training document certifies this pathway – 20 000 Europass documents have been issued over the past two years, mostly to young people under the age of 23.

Detailed information and links to national contact points can be found at: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/europass/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/europass/index_en.html).



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### Results of Netd@ys Europe 2001 available online

271 projects received a Netd@ays label in 2001. These were submitted by participants in all of the EU countries, Poland, Australia and Canada. Visit: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/netdays/results2001\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/netdays/results2001_en.pdf).

You can now register for this year's edition of [Netd@ys Europe](#), which is dedicated to the theme of "images" and aims to foster "image literacy". The Netd@ys label can be obtained for projects that are based on image products like videos, films or photography, etc. Projects with this label will be widely promoted during the Netd@ys week, which will take place from 18 to 24 November. The event will be linked with the Commission's new European Cinema Week, which will take place in over 50 European towns and cities from 14 to 24 November 2002.



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## EU Information Policy

### New online version of TED launched

The new version of [Tenders Electronic Daily](#) (TED), the online version of the Supplement to the Official Journal of the European Communities was launched on 14 May 2002. TED is the one-stop official source for information on public procurement opportunities in the European Union, the European Economic Area and beyond. All invitations to tender for public works, services and supply contracts meeting specific threshold criteria must be advertised through the Supplement, which is published in two electronic formats: the TED Internet service and CD-ROM.

The new TED now offers a new layout and design to increase its user-friendliness and a simplified technical environment, which allows the service to run directly on any standard browser. It is updated daily and is accessible free of charge.



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### **Parliament report on access to documents adopted**

Parliament adopted on 14 May, the report drafted by MEP Maij-Weggen (A5-0125/2002) on annexing to the Rules of Procedure a list of documents directly accessible through the register of Parliament's documents. It followed on from the rapporteur's previous report (13 November 2001) on adapting the Rules of Procedure to ensure compliance with Regulation (EC) no 1049/2001 regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents. The list takes the form of an annex to the Rules of Procedure setting out the categories of document which are directly accessible through the register. They fall into five groups: documents relating to Parliament's activities, general information documents, official documents forwarded by other institutions, third-party documents and administrative documents. The report can be found at [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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## **EU Research and Development**

### **Dissemination of research results available online**

The [Technology Implementation Plans](#) (TIPs) produced by all FP5 research projects are designed to stimulate its exploitation as marketable goods and services. They aid partners' planning for the exploitation of their research results, and form a ready source of information for dissemination through the [Cordis Technology Market Place](#), Innovation Relay Centres (IRCs) and other innovation brokerage networks.

The new eTIP service is a web-based application designed to streamline the whole process into four steps – registration, ideas for the future, submission and approval by the Commission. The eTIP must be delivered within two months of a project's completion, and in some cases requests earlier submission of an interim version. The latest Technology Market Place provides potential exploiters with the support of professional technology transfers advisers in its many regional offices. In addition, it helps the Commission to monitor the follow-up of each project and to make assessments of its socio-economic impacts.



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### **EU Institutions reach compromise on FP6**

On 15 May, Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by MEP Caudron on the European Research

Area. Parliament specified that Specific Support Actions will be implemented to encourage the participation of SMEs, small research teams, newly developed and remote research centres in the activities of the priority thematic areas, in particular via the Networks of Excellence and the Integrated Projects. The implementation of these actions will rely on the specific information and assistance structures, including the network of national contact points established by member states, and will aim at the smooth transition from the Fifth to the Sixth Framework Programme.

A meeting between the three institutions prior to Parliament plenary session led to an agreement by the Parliamentary Industry committee to drop previous tabled amendments and to replace them with 34 compromise amendments. Increases in the budgets for information society, science and society amongst others, were included in the package. Budgetary reductions were also agreed for e.g. horizontal research activities involving SMEs, research infrastructures and anticipation of scientific and technological needs.

The Commission presented its opinion on Parliament second reading (COM(2002)0284) on 30 May. The proposed text is now awaiting Council second reading. Council had previously outlined in a letter that the new package would have the backing of the necessary number of member states, despite reservations expressed by Austria, Italy and Germany.



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### Commission new FP6 infrastructures paper now published

The European Commission has published a [working paper](#) outlining the proposals for supporting research infrastructures in the FP6 and is inviting comments on the proposal. The paper relates to support for research infrastructures in the part of the FP6 entitled 'Structuring the European Research Area', which refers to facilities and resources that provide services to the research community in both academic and industrial domains. Five schemes are suggested for implementation: trans national access, integrated infrastructure initiatives, communication network development, design studies and the construction of new infrastructures. The full document is available from: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/pdf/fp6-infrastructures-final.pdf>. Interested parties are invited to send comments to Marco Malacarne, email: [Marco.Malacarne@cec.eu.int](mailto:Marco.Malacarne@cec.eu.int).



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### Commission seeks feedback on the ERA-NET scheme

Another [document](#) has been published by the Commission to open a discussion on the provisions for improving the co-operation and co-ordination of research activities at national and regional level. The ERA-NET scheme is expected to contribute to the structuring of the ERA by intensifying co-operation and co-ordination through the networking of research activities and the opening up of national and regional research programmes. The scheme will be implemented as a 'co-ordination action' and financed with € 160m under the specific programme 'Integrating and strengthening the ERA'. Four headings are being suggested: systematic exchange of information and best practice; strategic activities; implementation of joint activities and trans national research activities. Each ERA-NET must involve research activities undertaken in at least five member/associated states in order to obtain a significant effect at European level. The Commission also proposes that partners establish a 'unified management structure' to carry out e.g. scientific and administrative management, development of strategic activities, maintenance of standards, follow-up research activities.

Funding under 'co-ordination actions' will be limited to the costs of activities undertaken to implement the ERA-NET. No support will be provided for the research activities themselves. The first call for proposals will be published at the start of the framework programme, the first deadline being in early 2003 (€ 40m) and then, every six months (€ 20m for each call). Comments should be sent to Anne Mandenoff, mail: [anne.mandenoff@cec.eu.int](mailto:anne.mandenoff@cec.eu.int).



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## Information Society

### **Council Resolution on preserving digital content adopted**

On 23 May, Culture ministers agreed on a Resolution on preserving digital content. In its resolution, ministers propose objectives and indicative measures for further analysis to stimulate the development of policies for preserving digital culture and heritage, as well as their accessibility, through, amongst others, the support of the relevant custodial organisations e.g. **archives, libraries and museums** collectively and individually, in their responsibilities for collecting digital content and keeping it accessible over time and the establishment of co-operation frameworks and mechanisms between Member States for exchanging experiences on policies, programmes and related regulatory issues.

The Council invites the Commission, in collaboration with member states, to assess the situation, report back to the Council, (in principle every two years after the adoption of this Resolution), and to draw up an action plan, as appropriate. The resolution should be adopted at a forthcoming meeting, after finalisation of the text.



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### **High-level meeting on digitisation of cultural content held**

On 16 and 17 May, a high-level meeting on digitising cultural content, organised by the European Commission and the Spanish Presidency, was held in Alicante (Spain). The group of national representatives on the co-ordination of national digitisation policies met to examine progress made in the activities of the Lund Action Plan and its various working groups. This plan promotes the actions related to digitisation programmes and policies. On the second day, a seminar to encourage the exchange of good practice between member states took place. Projects from various countries were presented e.g. Minerva.

National representatives presented their report on national activities (December 2001 - May 2002) and adopted the 'Terms of Reference' and the Web publishing of the 'National Policy Profile'. Conclusions of the DLM-Forum, future activities and planning, selected projects and presentations on preserving tomorrow's memory and the Sixth Framework programme were also part of the programme.



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### **Results of conference to assess GoDigital results available online**

The Commission DGs for Enterprise and Information Society held a conference on 16 May on eEurope, [SMEs GoDigital](#), aimed at sharing the results and experiences of GoDigital. The GoDigital initiative, part of the eEurope action plan, aims at encouraging companies to use Internet in their business and at maximising the impact of these activities through the exchange of information and best practices.



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## Internal Market

## Results of the latest Internal Market Scoreboard available online

On 21 May, Internal market ministers heard a presentation by Commissioner Bolkestein on the latest version of the scoreboard, which sets out the progress made in reaching the aims of the internal market. The scoreboard, which the Commission publishes every six months, contains an analysis of member states' deficits in transposing Community legislation.

According to the latest [Internal Market scoreboard](#) (no 10, 16 May 2002), there are still significant delays in implementing at national level many pieces of EU law approved by member states' ministers in the Council and by the European Parliament. Only Sweden, Denmark, Finland, the UK, the Netherlands, Belgium and Spain currently meet the target set by EU leaders at the Stockholm European Council in Spring 2001, of having an implementation deficit of 1.5 % or less.



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## Council debate on Community patent held

On 21 May, Internal market ministers held a discussion on the main aspects of the Community patent and adopted several conclusions. The Council will continue its discussions 'inter alia' on the issue in particular, on the basis of further input from the Commission. In addition, the Council will review the balance of the resulting overall package to ensure that a final and global agreement will meet the criteria laid down by the European Council. The proposed directive is awaiting final decision/signature, not expected however before the end of the year as member states have not made progress either on the linguistic regime for the patent or the competent jurisdiction.



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## Telecommunications

### Commission launches investigation on German access to local loop

Following several complaints, the Commission sent on 8 May a statement of objections to the German telecom operator, Deutsche Telekom AG (DT). This statement is the first stage in the investigation it has launched after suspected unfair pricing for access to its local loop.

In Germany, DT is active on the upstream market for wholesale local loop access to competitors, and on the downstream market for retail access services to end-users, where it holds a dominant position. The Commission believes that DT is abusing its dominant position by practising unfair pricing measures amounting to a margin squeeze between its wholesale and retail tariffs. A margin squeeze is deemed to exist because of an insufficient spread between DT's tariff for retail subscriptions and those for wholesale local loop access. Consumers are most affected as this restricts the choice of service suppliers and limits price competition. DT has now two months to justify its actions. In addition, DT has to review its charges and should not use prices to repel new entrants.



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## Parliament report amending guidelines for trans-European networks adopted

On 14 May, Parliament adopted (first reading), using its procedure without debate, the report by MEP Flesch (A5-0114/2002) on the Commission proposal to lay down the guidelines for

trans-European telecommunications networks, following up the 1997 decision to set up the programme. Several amendments designed to clarify the text and include broadband and mobile phones in the projects of common interest were tabled. Other amendments referred to the definition of the term 'telecommunication infrastructure', and a requirement for a report on the implementation of the Decision before 31 January 2005. In areas of public interest where there are intrinsic barriers caused by cultural differences, in particular languages, the Commission proposes increasing the EU's financial contribution to, at the highest level, 20% of the total investment. Financial considerations will be dealt with under a separate amendment to the TEN financial Regulation.

The proposed guidelines are awaiting Council common position, scheduled for 17 June. The full report can be found at [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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## Trade

### WTO does not have a deadline on the FSC matter

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 was postponed until 17 June 2002 (see [Hot News April](#), p. 9). Nevertheless, this date was mentioned by Europeans and American officials, but it has not been confirmed by the WTO. The panel of experts who must decide on the issue has not



given a deadline.

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## Youth Policy

### Council conclusions on the White Paper on Youth policy formally adopted

On 7 May, the Council adopted conclusions on the follow-up of the Commission White Paper entitled 'A new impetus for European youth', as agreed at its session on 14 February. The conclusions were published in the [OJ](#) no 2002/C 119/04, p. 6 of 22 May 2002.

In addition, Parliament adopted on 14 May, the resolution drafted by MEP Gröner (A5-0126/2002) on European Youth policy. Parliament welcomed the White Paper, but considered that it could not be regarded as optimum. It can be used constructively if it is seen as part of a process about participation and in connection with, for example, the White Paper on Governance. Whilst the open method of co-ordination is an appropriate way of improving co-operation at European level in the specific field of youth policy, the procedure for applying the method needs to be defined more precisely e.g. priority areas, common guidelines and objectives to Council and Parliament should be proposed before adoption by the Council. 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.

