



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

June 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.

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## Consumer protection

### Commission consultation on Data protection directive launched

The European Commission is currently preparing its first report on the implementation of the **Data Protection Directive** (Directive 95/46/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 1995 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data and on the free movement of such data (OJ L 281, 23.11.1995, p. 31) and has launched a **broad consultation exercise**. Contributions consisting of experiences with implementation, best/worst practice, and/or ideas for improvements/simplification would be of particular interest. The results will be reported to a Conference on 30 September and 1 October 2002 in Brussels.

For short contributions you can use the questionnaires on <http://europa.eu.int/yourvoice> and send it to the Commission via Internet up to **15 September**. For more detailed comments, e.g. organisations representing business/consumers, position papers should be sent to the European Commission, DG Internal Market, Data Protection Unit, C-100 6/14, B-1049 Brussels; email: [MARKT-A-4@cec.eu.int](mailto:MARKT-A-4@cec.eu.int), if possible by **31 July**. Contributions may be made up to **31 August**, but (depending on the volume of contributions received) the Commission cannot undertake to include these in its analysis for the conference contributions. For further information on data protection, visit: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal\\_market/en/dataprot/](http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/en/dataprot/).



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## Parliament second reading on data protection directive

Parliament largely approved on 30 May, the compromise on the Directive on data protection thus, there will be no conciliation procedure. Parliament however rejected the report by MEP Cappato. On the issue of data protection, it was agreed that member states may only lift the protection of data privacy in order to conduct criminal investigations or safeguard national or public security, when this is a necessary. On spamming, Parliament accepted the Council's common position, thus approving an opt-in system for email, faxes and automated calling systems, which means that users should give prior permission for receiving unsolicited electronic communications for marketing purposes.

As regards cookies, Parliament accepted the Council's common position that users should have the right to refuse them, specifying that users should be provided with clear and comprehensive information on their purposes. On the inclusion of personal data into public directories, Parliament again accepted the Council's common position, saying that users should give prior permission. Parliament has maintained the possibility for member states to allow reverse search functions. Finally, Parliament asked for a review of the Directive within three years of its application. The Commission presented its second opinion on 17 June 2002. The proposed directive is now awaiting Council second reading.



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## Co-operation with third countries

### Council conclusions on education and ICTs with developing countries adopted

On 30 May, Development ministers adopted conclusions on **ICTs and development** and a resolution on **education and poverty**. In its conclusions, the Council recommends principles and priority actions. The Council states that a more systematic approach should be introduced for the use of ICTs in Community development projects and programmes. The Council also notes that the use and development of local content should be promoted to favour cost-effective solutions for low-income countries, local content and cultural diversity. With regard to the resolution on education and poverty, the Council calls on the Community and member states to seek for greater synergy of policies and strategies to improve, accelerate, and render more efficient the partner countries' efforts in education. In addition, the Council invites the Commission to submit in the annual report on EC development policy, an assessment of progress on the implementation of this Resolution. Progress made in its implementation will be reviewed in November 2004.

Both Council conclusions and the resolution can be consulted from:

<http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/newmain.asp?lang=1>, under Council, then Development (2429th Council meeting, 30 May 2002, Press 147 no 8958/02).



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## Candidate countries participation in the IDA programme

Administrations in the **Czech Republic, Latvia, Poland, Romania** and **Slovenia** will be able to exchange data with EU member states' back offices on how best to apply EU law, enforce single market rules, and supply eGovernment services across borders to citizens and enterprises, further to a European Commission decision taken on 20 June. This decision opens the way for them to participate in the IDA programme, whose € 23.6m workprogramme for 2002 was approved by the Commission on 4 June. IDA participation rules will be laid down in memoranda of understanding soon to be signed with these countries.

For a full description of IDA actions, visit: <http://europa.eu.int/ISPO/ida/jsps/index.jsp?fuseAction=home>.



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### **Framework decision on participation of Bulgaria in Community programmes adopted**

On 4 June 2002, ECOFIN ministers agreed on adopting the decision on the general terms and conditions for the participation of **Bulgaria** in Community programmes. 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.

The decision establishes the possibility for Bulgaria to participate in all programmes which are open to the CCEE; the requirement for a financial contribution to be made to the Community budget; the participation of representatives of Bulgaria (as observers) on programme committees; and the fact that projects submitted by Bulgaria will be subject to the same conditions as those for member states. On the Community side, the specific terms and conditions, in particular the financial contribution, for participation in each individual programme will be determined by the Commission in collaboration with the Bulgarian authorities.



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### **Council political agreement on TEMPUS III reached**

The Education/Youth Council reached on 30 May, political agreement on the Decision amending "Tempus III", the trans-European cooperation scheme for higher education, to promote regional cooperation throughout the Euro-Mediterranean region. After linguistic finalisation, the Decision will be adopted at a forthcoming Council meeting (A Items) and published in the Official Journal.



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### **EEA to participate in European Year of People with Disabilities 2003**

On 30 May 2002, Development ministers approved the draft decision of the EEA Joint Committee amending Protocol 31 to the EEA Agreement to extend cooperation in the field of social policy in order to allow for the participation in the European Year of People with Disabilities 2003.



## **New decisions to open negotiations with Switzerland adopted**

General affairs ministers adopted on 17 June 2002, four decisions authorising the opening of negotiations with Switzerland in four sectors: implementation of the **Schengen acquis**, **Dublin**, the establishment of a **free trade agreement on services** and an agreement in the **audiovisual** field. Furthermore, the Council and the Commission agreed to prepare further negotiations to allow Switzerland participate in the next education, training and youth programme cycle. The Commission will look into the possibility of setting up practical arrangements for the present programme cycle.



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## **eCommerce**

### **Council conclusions on administrative cooperation on tax matters adopted**

The Council approved on 4 June, conclusions on administrative cooperation on tax matters. In its conclusions, the Council asked this working party to continue its work on the Commission's proposals for the Regulation on administrative cooperation in the field of VAT and for the Decision on computerising the movement and surveillance of excisable products so that they may be adopted before 1 April 2003. The Council hopes that it will be possible to arrive at texts to which every member state can subscribe.



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## **Education**

### **Council resolution on lifelong learning adopted**

Education ministers approved on 30 May, a resolution on education and lifelong learning. In its resolution, the Council stresses that lifelong learning should be enhanced by the actions and policies developed within the framework of the European employment strategy, the action plan for skills and mobility, Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth Community Programmes, the eLearning initiative, and in the research and innovation actions, amongst others.

The Council invites member states to develop and implement strategies involving all relevant players, e.g. social partners, civil society, local and regional authorities; to improve active participation in lifelong learning; to mobilise the resources for such strategies and to promote lifelong learning for all in conjunction with the European Employment Strategy. The Commission is invited to promote and coordinate actions; stimulate quality incentives and the exchange of good practices; promote the participation of candidate countries in developing lifelong learning strategies; enhance cooperation with relevant international organisations, e.g. Council of Europe, OECD, UNESCO; and prepare, in cooperation with member states, a progress report on the follow-up to its Communication and to this resolution before the Spring European Council of 2004. Furthermore, member states and the Commission are invited to suggest concrete actions to implement the content of this resolution.

After linguistic finalisation, the resolution will be adopted at a forthcoming meeting of the Council and published in the Official Journal. Meanwhile, the resolution can be consulted at: <http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/newmain.asp?lang=1>, under Council, then Education/Youth Affairs (2430th Council meeting, 30 May 2002, Press 145 no 8944/02). Moreover, Parliament report on lifelong learning (MEP van Brempt) was adopted unanimously by CULT committee on 4 June

2002.



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### **Socrates programme soon to be amended**

Commissioner Reding presented to Education ministers on 30 May, an explanation of the proposed amendment to the Decision establishing the second phase of the Socrates programme. The proposition will be studied in detail shortly by the Council and the European Parliament. The amendment proposed by the Commission in early May 2002 concerns the abolition of a specific obligation to provide proof of the co-financing of at least 25% of the cost of the project. This technical amendment is important as it simplifies the administrative burden, thereby encouraging the participation of smaller institutions such as primary schools.



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## **Enterprise**

### **Presidency conclusions on competition policy**

On 6 June, Industry ministers noted progress on the proposed introduction of a new system of implementing the competition rules in Articles 81 and 82 of the Treaty. The Spanish Presidency noted that all delegations and the Commission remain fully committed to work towards an effective and viable new system for the application of Articles 81 and 82 of the Treaty. In addition, the Presidency acknowledged that the delegations' positions on the main issues to be tackled in the second semester of 2002 had been identified to meet the target date set by the Barcelona summit (March 2002), which called on the Council to adopt the new legislative framework by the end of 2002.

The proposed reform aims at making implementation more effective and decentralised application of Community competition law, while maintaining consistency and preserving the special responsibility of the Commission. In particular, it provides for the introduction of a system of legal exception, based on the principle that agreements not contravening the rules on competition are automatically lawful.



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## **EU Research and Development**

### **Framework Programmes for research 2002-2006 adopted**

On 3 June 2002, the Employment/Social ministers adopted the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) of the European Community for RTD activities, contributing towards the creation of the European Research Area (ERA) and to innovation (2002-2006) and the FP6 of EURATOM for nuclear research and training activities.

By adopting these texts, Council approved the amendments made by Parliament at second reading. The overall budget attributed to the two programmes is € 17.5m - € 16 270m for the EC programme and € 1 230m for the Euratom programme respectively.



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### Parliament report on structuring the ERA adopted

Parliament adopted on 12 June, by 525 votes for and 5 against, the report by MEP Zorba subject to a number of non-binding amendments which aim to help the EU to achieve the overall aim of making a tangible improvement in innovation performance, in the short, medium and long term, through better integration between research and innovation. The programme should help to develop a positive attitude towards research and innovation among teachers and journalists and make the general public more aware of the need for innovation. The proposed programme is now awaiting final decision/signature. The full report (A5-0206/2002) 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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### Parliament report on direct actions by the Joint Research Centre adopted

Parliament adopted on 12 June, by 526 votes for and 5 against, the report by MEP Pietrasanta, subject to some amendments. Parliament stresses that the JRC should pay attention to the applicant countries and concentrate in particular on the scientific and technical aspects associated with transfer of the *acquis communautaire* in relation to the different policies of the Union. In addition, the JRC should place a particular emphasis on the safety of the citizen, whether in terms of e.g. environmental protection, health care. Lastly, Parliament requests that the JRC develop an active programme of knowledge of, and disseminating information on effective practices for implementing sustainable development and to establish a support mechanism for decision-making in risk management. The proposed programme is awaiting final decision/signature. The full report (A5-0210/2002) 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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### Parliament report on strengthening the ERA adopted

On 12 June, Parliament adopted the report by MEP van Velzen by 521 votes for, 3 against and 0 abstentions, adjusting in detail the first specific programmes of integration and strengthening of the European Research Area (ERA) under the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6). The aim of the non-binding amendments is to clarify the thematic priorities. The proposal is awaiting final decision.

With regard to **Information Society Technologies** (IST), the amendments state that research shall focus on new technologies for valorisation of **artistic, archaeological and cultural heritage**. Other amendments adopted stress the need to develop mobile, wireless, optical and broadband communication infrastructures and computing technologies that can be adapted to accommodate new applications and services. The importance of including the further rapid development of the next-generation pan-European gigabit research network -GEANT into a network with a capacity of 100 Gb/s was also stressed by Parliament.

With regard to **Citizens and governance in a knowledge-based society**, MEPs believe that priority should be given to understanding Europe's history, its peoples and its cultural heritage, the evolution of European social and political thought and institutions, the unity and diversity of European culture and the European contributions to world civilisation. The full report (A5-0211/2002) 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.



## Information Society

### Online public services latest study available online

The latest [study](#) from the European Commission on eGovernment in Europe, carried out by Cap Gemini Ernst & Young, shows clear progress since the last measurement in October 2001, with the availability and interactivity of public services on the Internet rising by 10 percentage points to 55%. The study, which was carried out in April 2002 as part of the 'Benchmarking eEurope' initiative, measures twenty basic public services in the 15 EU member states, plus Iceland, Norway and Switzerland. The online delivery of public services has been a priority of the EU's eEurope initiative since the launch of the first eEurope Action Plan in 2000. eGovernment will continue as a priority in the second eEurope Action Plan, launched at the European Summit in Seville on 21 June.

In this study, a representative sample of more than 10,000 public service providers in the 18 countries were assessed.



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### Commission proposed directive on public sector information adopted

The European Commission presented on 5 June, a [proposal](#) for a Directive aiming to facilitate the re-use of public sector information throughout Europe. The directive will aim at a minimum harmonisation of the rules for exploiting public sector information throughout Europe. Such minimum harmonisation is required for the creation of new cross-border information services and in particular for the wireless internet. The proposed directive builds upon the public consultation that followed the publication in January 1999 of the Commission Green Paper on PSI in the IS (COM(1998)585) and strategic analyses that have been carried out subsequently. On 23 October 2001 the Commission adopted a Communication (COM(2001)607), outlining its basic orientations on the issue. The action is part of the eEurope action plan endorsed by Feira European Council of 19 and 20 June 2000 under the priority action 'government online'.

The proposal enhances fair competition, it limits exclusive deals and contains the principle of non-discrimination. In addition, it sets an upper limit to the charges for the re-use of public sector information resources and regulates practicalities (replying times, formats, standard licences).

The proposed directive will be submitted to the EU's Council of Ministers and the European Parliament for adoption under the co decision procedure. Parliament was to draw up an opinion on the Commission communication adopted last October. The text in question was a communication, not a legislative text. In the meantime however, the Commission adopted a draft opinion and a proposal for a directive. MEP van Velzen, rapporteur of the Committee on Industry, responsible for the report has therefore decided to await the legislative proposal before deciding which procedure to follow.



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### Presidency conclusions on the eEurope 2002 action plan

The Telecom Council held on 18 June, an orientation debate on the [eEurope action plan](#) presented to the Seville European Council for endorsement. Council and Commission will now jointly prepare the implementation of the action plan prior to its entry into force on 1 January 2003. The Council conclusions can be consulted from: <http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/newmain.asp?lang=1>, under Council, then Transport/Telecommunications Council meeting, 17-18 June 2002 (2438th Press 176 no 9702/02).



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## EU institutions agreement on the IDA programme reached

Parliament adopted on 11 June, a resolution drafted by MEP Read (procedure without debate) on guidelines for the IDA programme. On 17 June, Telecommunication ministers reached political agreement on the updating of the second phase of the IDA programme, under way since 1999, to promote the establishment and use of trans-European networks for the electronic interchange of data between administrations, accepting all the amendments adopted by Parliament at first reading. The amendments concern:

- introducing a financial reference for the period 2002-2004, namely € 39,8m for the 'guidelines' Decision and € 34,2m for the 'interoperability' Decision;
- extending the programme to certain non-Community countries;
- taking account of new initiatives such as the eEurope Action Plan;
- adapting the committee procedure to the new rules on the subject (introduced by Decision no 1999/468/EC).

The [IDA programme](#) aims at facilitating the interchange of data in order, inter alia, to support the implementation of Community policies. The updating concerns two proposals designed to amend Decision No 1719/1999/EC on a series of guidelines and Decision No 1720/1999/EC adopting a series of actions and measures to ensure interoperability of and access to IDA networks. The Council will adopt the programme when the texts have been finalised.



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## Internet

### Council conclusions on migration to the new Internet protocol adopted

Telecommunications ministers adopted on 17 June, conclusions on the migration to the new Internet protocol Ipv6. In its conclusions, the Council invites the Commission to evaluate the social impact on society, citizens and businesses of the implementation of Ipv6 and investigate security issues related to Ipv6. In addition, it invites the private sector to consider initiatives aimed at integrating Ipv6 infrastructures, participate in the establishment of a European programme on training and education on IPv6 and contribute towards ongoing Ipv6 work within standards and specification bodies. The Council conclusions can be consulted from: <http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/newmain.asp?lang=1>, under Council, then Transport/Telecommunications Council meeting, 17-18 June 2002 (2438th Press 176 no 9702/02).



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### Parliament vote on eEurope 2002 Internet and the disabled

Parliament adopted on 13 June, the resolution drafted by MEP Belder on the Commission's communication on accessibility of public websites and their content for disabled people. Parliament called in particular, for the integration of the elderly and the disabled in the information society.

Parliament felt that the WAI initiative, which is voluntary in nature, should be strengthened to require, on a mandatory basis, all public websites of EU institutions and member states to be

fully accessible to disabled people by 2003. In addition, it called for compliance with the authoring tools accessibility guidelines (ATAG) 1.0 by 2003 in order to ensure that disabled people can read and manage the content of web pages. Translations authorised by the W3C should be made available in the languages of all member states.

The Commission is asked to verify the cost-benefits achieved by compliance with "the guidelines" for web designers and website providers. Moreover, it is asked to place specific emphasis on guideline 14 of the web content accessibility guidelines that requires documents to be clear and simple in order to counter the further exclusion of people with reading problems or intellectual disability from e-Government and the web. The full report (A5-0147/2002) 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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### **Council general guidelines on the action plan on safer use of the Internet adopted**

On 22 March 2002, the Commission proposed a decision for eSafe - the follow-up to the [Safer Internet Action Plan](#). The Telecommunications Council laid down on 17 June, general guidelines, pending Parliament's opinion, on the draft Decision extending for two further years the 1999-2002 action plan on safer use of the Internet. The Council asked the Presidency to forward these guidelines informally to Parliament, with a view to reaching a possible agreement at first reading.

The text is intended to network the various national initiatives in the field, increase coordination with other Community initiatives on the subject and augment the current action plan with specific provisions to associate the countries which are candidates for accession to the Union. It also aims at adapting the action plan to new Internet technologies and Internet platforms and services allowing a wider range of online content. The Commission proposed an additional budget for eSafe of € 13.3 million (original budget € 25 million). For further information visit: [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 vote on social inclusion across the EU**

Parliament adopted on 11 June, its resolution based on the report by MEP Figueiredo on social cohesion. Parliament stated that member states should provide accessible and compulsory education for a minimum of 12 years to all children, and strengthen the institution of "second chance" schools. The open method of coordination must embrace greater openness by involving local and regional authorities, labour and management and by ensuring a broad public debate at national level to achieve a genuine exchange of best practice. Parliament should be fully involved in open coordination. Member states must ensure that policies are put into place as close as possible to the individual, and clear lines of responsibility drawn between the different levels of competence.

A relevant strategy to combat social exclusion should pay particular attention to women and children. Finally, Parliament felt that particular attention must be paid to all the risk factors identified by the National Action Plans which highlight the multidimensional nature of poverty and social exclusion, which is not restricted to access to the labour market, but also concerns education, health, and participation in decision-making forums. The full report (A5-0158/2002) 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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## **Council Resolution on skills and mobility adopted**

On 3 June, Employment/Social ministers adopted a resolution on skills and mobility. In its resolution, the Council underlines that, in order to achieve the employment targets set by the Lisbon and Stockholm summits and the strategic goal for 2010, it is necessary to enhance the importance of lifelong learning as a basic component of the European social model, e.g. "by encouraging social partners' agreements, in accordance with national traditions and practices, on innovations in lifelong learning, taking advantage of the complementary elements between lifelong learning and adaptability, through flexible working time arrangements and alternation between training and employment".

In addition, the Council emphasises that lifelong learning is a cornerstone of the European employment strategy and must remain a key priority for the future employment guidelines. The Council invites the Commission to promote, in close cooperation with the Council and member states, partnership in education and training. Co-operation should ensure the active involvement of the social partners, the vocational education, training institutions, and other relevant stakeholders. Furthermore, the Council invites member states to develop, within the framework of European employment strategy, skills for the new labour market in the context of lifelong learning, in particular in the area of ICT.

Ministers agreed to publish the resolution in the Official Journal. Meanwhile, the resolution can be consulted from: <http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/newmain.asp?lang=1>, under Council, then Employment/Social Policy (2431st Council meeting, 3 June 2002, Press 132 no 8800/02).



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## **Telecommunications**

### **Council Decision on trans-European networks adopted**

On 17 June, Telecommunication ministers adopted a Decision revising the guidelines which have been in force since 1997 for the trans-European telecommunications networks, accepting all the amendments adopted by the Parliament at first reading.

The amendments to the current guidelines take account of a special report from the Court of Auditors on the implementation of the Decision, plus an external evaluation, technological progress since 1997 and the expertise gained through management of the programme. These amendments concern inter alia the trans-European dimension of the projects concerned, the strategic priorities of the eEurope Action Plan, reduction of the number of areas covered by the projects, the deployment of public services and the interconnection and interoperability of the networks.

Following adoption, the European Commission will publish a call for proposals, so that projects implementing the new guidelines can start as soon as possible.



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## **Youth Policy**

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

Education ministers approved on 30 May, a Resolution on European cooperation in the field of youth. In its resolution, the Council calls for the inclusion of the youth dimension in other policies and programmes, both at national and at European level, in line with the priorities set forth in the White Paper (education, lifelong learning, mobility, employment and social integration, combating racism and xenophobia, autonomy) and other priorities to be defined by the Council in cooperation with the Commission. In addition, it proposes an indicative timetable:

- application of the open method of coordination will start in July 2002 (participation and information priorities);
- timetable for other priorities will be determined by successive Presidencies in consultation with member states and the Commission;
- timetable for a youth dimension in other policies and programmes will be coordinated with the processes concerned;
- evaluation report on the cooperation framework will be discussed by the Council in 2004.

In addition, the Council held a discussion which highlighted a large number of points concerning the participation of young people in political and civil life in member states.

After linguistic finalisation, the resolution will be adopted at a forthcoming meeting of the Council and published in the Official Journal. Meanwhile, the resolution can be consulted from: <http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/newmain.asp?lang=1>, under Council, then Education/Youth Affairs (2430th Council meeting, 30 May 2002, Press 145 no 8944/02).



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### **Council debate on implementation of the Youth programme**

On 30 May 2002, Youth ministers heard Commissioner Reding reporting on the current stage of implementation of the Youth Programme (2000-2006). Although it has been implemented for only two and a half years, the Council considered it useful to hear the Commission's views on the experience gained over the first few years, especially as the Decision establishing the programme did not provide for an interim report until 2005.



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