



November 2002

EBLIDA Hot News

The EBLIDA newsletter on EU library & information society issues

November highlights:

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Culture

European co-operation in the field of culture

The Culture Council approved on 11 November, a draft Resolution on the implementation of the work plan on European co-operation in the field of culture, regarding in particular the concept of 'European added value' (part I) and the mobility of persons and circulation of works in the cultural sector (part II).

The formal adoption of the Resolution will take place at a forthcoming Council's session as an "A item" (points adopted without debate).

The debate concerned member states' readiness to consider the different measures for the promotion of mobility of persons referred to in the Resolution, to analyse current obstacles to mobility and to ponder on the possibilities for identifying and removing such obstacles, or improving on the current situation.

See press release - 2461st Education, Youth and Culture Council, 11-12 November 2002

<http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/newmain.asp?lang=1>.

Information Society

eEurope 2005, Benchmarking indicators for education and training systems

The Commission communication (COM (2002) 655 final) adopted on 21 November presents the Commission's proposals for eEurope 2005 benchmarking indicators in preparation of the Telecom Council to be held on 5 December 2002.

Five European benchmarks for education and training are proposed, which will be useful for implementing the joint objectives for education and training systems.

With regard to lifelong learning, the communication states that "by 2010, the EU-average level of participation in lifelong learning should be at least 15% of the adult working age population (25-64 age group) and in no country should it be lower than 10%.

Lifelong learning is an overarching objective for all our actions in the field of education and training.

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Interactive Media Content in Europe

Culture ministers approved on 11 November, a draft Resolution on interactive media content in Europe. Its formal adoption will take place at a forthcoming Council's session as an "A item" and the published on the Official Journal.

The resolution can be consulted at <http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/newmain.asp?lang=1>, under Press Office/ Newsroom, Council, Education, Youth and Culture, (Press release 2461st, 11-12 November 2002).

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EBLIDA Staff wishes you a Merry Christmas and a very happy New Year 2003!

Lobbying for archives and libraries

What is GATS and what have libraries got to do with it?



GATS is the General Agreement on Trade in Services, the World Trade Organization's agreement on the service sector. GATS is the first ever set of multilateral, legally binding rules covering international trade in services.

Ranging from architecture, engineering, environmental, transport, energy and postal services to financial, tourism and health, the GATS also covers library, archive and museum services. Libraries fall under three categories:

telecommunication services - online information and database retrieval;
educational services - primary, secondary, higher education, adult and other educational services; recreational, cultural and sporting services - libraries, archives, museums and other cultural services.

Services in any of these categories can be "traded" between the 144 WTO member governments.

Then when a country agrees to put a service sector into the basket, the principle of National Treatment applies. This means that domestic services, including public sector services, are opened up to competition from foreign

agencies, who can claim the same funding and subsidies.

We believe that this gives rise to potentially alarming consequences for cultural and educational services, where currently the preservation of our cultural heritage, free access to information and the notion of a community-based library serving the needs of the local population, take priority over profit margins. The whole tradition of public funding for these institutions could be undermined.

The GATS has been subject to widespread criticism from a range of civil organisations concerned at the perceived march towards privatisation and the increasing power of global corporations over democratic values and decisions.

So far, Austria is the only EU country to have taken commitments in the library sector and Iceland is the only country in the region.

For more information and the EBLIDA statement, go to:

<http://www.eblida.org/topics/wto/wto.htm>.

- EBLIDA, together with IFLA, will meet with the WTO in Geneva on 18 December 2002 and will lobby for the library case with the European Commission WTO mission, as well as other national delegations;
- EBLIDA was successful in including libraries in the Assembly of the European Regions Brixen Declaration on cultural diversity and GATS;
- EBLIDA attended the European Parliament hearing on GATS and the future of public services in November 2002;
- EBLIDA will respond to the European Commission public consultation on trade in services.

Audiovisual

Television without Frontiers (TVwF) directive

Culture ministers approved on 11 November, draft conclusions on the "Television without Frontiers" (TVwF) directive. The formal adoption of the conclusions will take place at a forthcoming Council's session. Following approval, delegations held a policy debate on the basis of a discussion paper drawn up by the Presidency, focusing in particular on the regulatory, cultural and technological

challenges facing the European audiovisual landscape.

The Commission fifth report on the implementation of the TVwF Directive in the member states (see above) will be accompanied by a work plan which will incorporate the Council's conclusions and outline future working methods, themes for discussion and respective timetable.

Directive 89/552/EEC of 3 October 1989 on the pursuit of television broadcasting activities as modified by Directive 97/36/EC of 30 June 1997

Fifth report on the application of Articles 4 and 5 of the TVwF directive

Every two years, member states provide the Commission with a report on the application of articles 4 and 5 of the TVwF Directive (89/552/EEC), concerning the broadcasting of European works and independent productions. The Commission forwards these reports to the Council and Parliament, together with an opinion, where appropriate, on the general application of these articles, as laid down in article 4(3).

The fifth report from the Commission (COM (2002) 0612) was adopted and transmitted to Council on 8 November. This communication, the first to implement the guidelines proposed to monitor the application of articles 4 and 5, adopted by the Commission on 11 June 1999, shows

the general trends observed both at Community level and in the individual member states concerned. For the reference period (1999-2000), the national reports reflect generally satisfactory application by the EU member states of the provisions of Article 4 (European works) and Article 5 (European works created by independent producers). Among the reasons given by member states for non-compliance is e.g. *Film1* - a library movie channel that broadcasts films from the 1950s - 1990s. This accounts for why Film1 did not reach the percentage target for recent works. The communication can be downloaded from http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/regul/twf/art45/comm2002_612final_en.pdf.

Community participation in the European Audiovisual Observatory

The Commission adopted on 11 November, its report on the implementation of Council Decision 1999/784/EC of 22 November 1999 concerning Community participation in the European Audiovisual Observatory (COM (2002) 0619). The report, which has been transmitted to Parliament and Council, covers both Commission's activities concerning institutional bilateral relations with the Observatory and the latter's main actions in respect of industry and public authorities' professional requirements since the adoption of the Council Decision.

The Observatory's newsletter IRIS presented in its 2000 Focus series four articles discussing:

- The WIPO legal instruments and the European copyright directives;
- Case law from different countries on whom owns electronic rights;
- Contractual and legal framework for electronic rights on the national level;
- Various schemes for Internet distribution of audiovisual work (MP3, Napster, Scour, and Gnutella).

In addition, IRIS plus 2002-2004 focused on problems related to "Movies online" (e.g. distribution of films over the Internet). The communication can be downloaded from http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/rpt/2002/com2002_0619en01.pdf.

The European Commission launches European Film Heritage Week

The first European Cinema Week was held between 15 and 24 November along with the traditional Netd@ys Europe, linking 30,000 schools via the Internet, which will be devoted to the cinema and education in the visual image.

Cined@ys is 40 TV stations, 250 screening venues in more than 24 different countries, including 55 cinemas from the Europa Cinemas network, 18 film institutes, film festivals and events in over 200 cities across Europe.

During Cined@ys, film libraries and the "Europa Cinémas" network are to organise a special programme with screenings

frequently accompanied by comments from cinema professionals, aimed particularly at young people. In parallel, public and private-sector TV channels will show nearly 200 films and organise debates and interviews on Europe's cinematographic heritage and the current situation in the sector.

The complete list of Europa Cinémas participating in Cined@ys is available at <http://www.europa-cinemas.org/frames/default.asp?Rubrique=0>. Programmes for film libraries are available on a country by country basis at http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/media/cineday_en_map.html.

Co-operation with third countries

EC and Brazil sign a Memorandum of Understanding on co-operation

On 19 November, the EC and Brazil signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on co-operation, which reflects the priorities for bilateral EC-Brazilian co-operation until the end of 2006. The memorandum foresees an indicative budget of close to € 64 million and includes the possibility of adjustment when the parties consider this necessary.

The Memorandum of Understanding five priority areas form the basis for the

country strategy paper on Brazil adopted by the Commission last August.

Three agreements for projects foreseen in the memorandum have already been signed. The start of their implementation is scheduled for early 2003.

The memorandum can be downloaded in French and Portuguese from http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/brazil/intro/ip02_1707.htm.

Five priority areas

- Public administration
- Economic co-operation
- Social development
- Research and technology
- Environment

Scientific research in the candidate countries

Parliament adopted on 20 November, the own-initiative report by MEP Zimmerling (A5-0349/2002) on the state of research in applicant countries and measures needed to ensure their full participation in the sixth framework programme (FP6) by 528 votes in favour, 2 against with 17 abstentions.

Parliament pointed out that there is often no clear relation between stated research priorities and the actual needs and capabilities of the candidate countries. There is a need for a new culture in

science and technology governance, involving open procedures and regular evaluation of research output and socio-economic impact. There is also an urgent need to link research and educational institutions with each other.

Twelve of the candidate countries were involved in the FP5 and they, together with Turkey, would be taking part in the FP6.

Download the report at http://www.europarl.eu.int/plenary/default_en.htm, under latest reports.

*First Reading (EP Opinion)
Procedure terminated*

Call for EU pressure to support media pluralism

The Parliament Culture committee held on 12 November 2002, a public hearing on the role of the media in the applicant countries and the Balkan Stability Pact countries. Speakers focused on the importance of journalistic ethics and professionalism and the problem of media concentration both in the applicant countries and the current EU member states.

The candidate and stability pact countries

Media Pluralism and Enlargement

On 18 November in a joint debate on the media, six oral questions to the Commission (B5-0499/2002, B5-0501/2002, B5-0503/2002, B5-0502/2002, B5-0500/2002 and B5-0498/2002) focused on the internal market, media pluralism and enlargement.

As regards media pluralism, the latest Commission overview on the internal market was presented back in 1994. In the light of enlargement, the increased use of new technologies and the danger of growing media concentration, MEPs feel that a renewed

Resolution on media concentration

The European Parliament adopted on 20 November, a resolution on media concentration (B5-0579/2002, B5-0580/2002, B5-0582/2002, B5-0584/2002, B5-0588/2002, B5-0590/2002). Parliament calls on the Commission and the member states to safeguard media pluralism and to ensure free and diversified media in all the member states. Parliament also insists that a European media market should be established and a level playing field is needed. Parliament calls on the Commission to draw

Enlargement events calendar

Check out the DG Enlargement new *Enlargement events calendar* at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/events/calendar.htm>, which gives an overview of public events related to the enlargement of the EU taking place in

increasingly raise the issue of media concentration in the existing member states when criticism is levelled against their countries, a point mentioned by MEP Vattimo. There was a lack of independence, ethical standards were low and investigative journalism was weak. In addition, journalists lacked proper training. This point was taken up by MEP Iivari, who proposed that the Socrates programme be used to train journalists from the applicant countries.

overview is required in order to assess the situation.

MEPs want to know in the light of both, the forthcoming enlargement and the surge in the use of new ICTs (Internet, digital TV, mobile phone services, etc.), how the Commission will ensure "a level playing field" in the internal market as regards the Media. Next MEPs asked the Commission whether it intends to submit a proposal for a directive on pluralism in the media sector as requested by Parliament on several occasions.

up an updated Green Paper by the end of 2003 on media pluralism both in member States and applicant countries. In addition, the resolution calls on the Commission to complete within this parliamentary term the implications of a European-level regulatory framework, or other regulatory options e.g. a directive, to safeguard freedom of expression and pluralism in the media. An appropriate proposal on this should be submitted to the Convention.

all current and future member states.

See also the latest weekly newsletter on enlargement at http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/docs/newsletter/latest_weekly.htm.

Procedure terminated

Culture

Greek priorities in the audiovisual and cultural fields

The Greek delegation notified Culture ministers that during its forthcoming Presidency (first half of 2003) special attention will be given to the **MEDIA** programme and the future of the **TVwF Directive**.

In the field of culture its priorities will include the discussion on **Article 151 of the Treaty** (Culture) in particular **paragraph 4** (promotion of cultural

diversity), the extension and mid-term review of the **Culture 2000** programme, the **access of disabled people to culture**, and further co-operation in the context of **national public archives**. It also took the opportunity to invite ministers for the informal meeting of Ministers of Culture due to take place in Thessaloniki on 24 May 2003.

Selection panel for 2007 European Capital of Culture

Culture ministers designated two of the seven members of the *European Capital of Culture* selection panel for 2007. The two candidates, Mr José Antonio Jáuregui and Mr Julius Nørbo, were proposed by the Spanish and Danish delegations respectively during the Culture Council on 23 May 2002.

According to the Decision establishing the European Capital of Culture, the Council

is invited to designate two of the seven members of the selection panel. The Commission and the Parliament designate two members each and the Committee of the Regions one member.

Candidates CVs can be obtained from the Council Press Office,

press.office@consilium.eu.int.

European Capital of Culture

http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/capeurcult_en.html.

Education

Commission activities in the field of education

The Commission informed Education ministers of its forthcoming **communication on universities** aimed at identifying the main challenges faced by these institutions including the question of research. A communication concerning **investment in education** is also being prepared.

In addition, the Commission informed the Council that it is currently preparing a **proposal on eLearning** with a view to establishing a programme that foresees, inter alia, twinning between schools, higher education virtual campuses and alternative paths in education.

European benchmarks in education and training, Follow-up to the Lisbon European Council

The European Commission adopted on 20 November, a communication on European benchmarks in education and training (COM (2002) 0629) which was transmitted to Parliament and Council on the same day.

In the communication, the term "benchmark" is used to refer to concrete targets grouped into six areas: investment

in education and training; early school leavers; graduates in Mathematics, Science and Technology; population having completed upper secondary education; key competencies and lifelong learning.

The communication is available at

http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2002/com2002_0629en01.pdf.

Follow-up report on education and training

Following a progress report from the Commission, Education ministers held on 12 November, a policy debate on the follow-up of the objectives report on education and training systems in Europe, regarding in particular to vocational education and training.

The eight groups working on this issue are expected to finish their work in time for an interim report on the implementation of the objectives to be presented at the Education Council in November 2003.

This report will serve as a basis for the final report to be presented at the European Spring

Council (2004) in accordance with the Barcelona mandate (March 2002). The debate was based on a discussion paper regarding member states' follow-up activities at national level, and the development of work necessary to achieve concrete results as soon as possible. Delegations underlined the importance of the open method of co-ordination and the need for an exchange of examples of good practice.

Moreover, Education ministers approved a draft Resolution on the promotion of enhanced European co-operation in vocational education and training. The formal adoption of the Resolution will take place at a forthcoming Council's session.

Erasmus World (2004-2008)

On 12 November, Commissioner Reding presented to the Council the proposal establishing the "Erasmus World" programme for the enhancement of quality in higher education and the promotion of intercultural understanding through co-operation with third countries.

The proposed duration of the programme is five years (2004-2008) with a financial envelope of € 200 million. The programme aims at making higher education in the Union more attractive to students and teachers in third countries by means of scholarships and the setting up of some 250 "European masters

courses". The programme will also provide for the mobility of European students and teachers to third countries.

Delegations underlined the Commission's contribution to the strengthening of European education systems and the promotion of cultural diversity. They also emphasised the importance of making European education systems more attractive to students and teachers outside Europe.

The proposal should be adopted at an early stage to ensure that the programme could start during the 2004-2005 academic year.

Education, training: programme Socrates, 2nd phase (amend. decision 253/2000/EC)

Competitive ministers adopted on 14 November, a decision on the co-financing requirements for decentralised actions (activities taking place at member state level) of the Socrates programme. The new text modifies decision 253/2000/EC on the second phase of the Socrates programme, under which financial assistance towards the realisation of projects may not normally exceed 75% of the total costs. Staff and infrastructure costs are not eligible for Community assistance, although other costs incurred during the realisation of the project can be covered up to 100%.

The current decision is aimed at allowing more flexibility in the application of the co-financing principle. Staff and infrastructure costs necessary for the implementation of a project will now be taken into account as the beneficiary's contribution for the realisation of the project. It is expected that this measure will in particular benefit projects run by small institutions (e.g. schools, adult education institutes) which generally have limited resources. The proposed text is now awaiting publication in the Official Journal.

First reading

Lingua Catalogue

The Lingua Catalogue, a searchable database on teaching/learning languages material, has just been updated with 41 new products, the results

of Lingua projects completed between May 1998 and September 2000. Visit http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates/lingua/catalogue/home_en.htm.

Results of European Year of Languages 2001

The Commission adopted on 4 November, its report on the implementation and results of the European Year of Languages 2001 (COM (2002) 0597). The report, which has been transmitted to Parliament and Council, shows that at European level, the Year provided an incentive for future developments.

190 co-financed projects took place at local, regional, national and transnational levels. Projects different activities e.g. festivals, conferences, seminars, exhibitions, open-days, mini language courses and competitions. The majority of them included a website and publications that were widely distributed. The projects covered over 60 languages, with a good

balance between official languages, regional and minority languages, languages of pre-accession countries and sign languages. Each project on average reached more than 12,000 people. The selection included a small number of media initiatives which reached several million TV viewers and radio listeners.

The Commission will present in mid-2003, a communication to Parliament and Council on an action plan to promote linguistic diversity and language learning, using resources available within existing Community programmes and activities. The report is available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/languages/download/rap_en.pdf.

Consultation on language learning and linguistic diversity

As part of its ongoing work to promote a multilingual Europe, the European Commission is undertaking a public consultation about language learning and linguistic diversity in Europe. The reply form will be available from early December 2002 to 31 January 2003.

All responses will be analysed and the results will be used in the development of an action plan, which will be published at http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/languages/consult_en.html.

Enterprise

Good Practice Business Support Services

Helping Businesses Grow is a guide for business support organisations which focuses on issues that refer to the growth phase of businesses. It offers 26 examples of proven good practice across Europe, with project contact details. The examples illustrate how many agencies involved in business support are providing services on management capacity building, adapting to changes arising from e.g. ICT, networking as well as promoting economic development by co-operating effectively with other development agencies. The guide is available online at

http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/entrepreneurship/support_measures/docs/helping_bu_sinesses_grow_en.pdf.

There is also a database that provides summaries of cases arising from the work of DG Enterprise, http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/smie/good_practice/index.htm. Analysis of good practice presented in concerted action events, http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/entrepreneurship/support_measures/support-services/analysis_of_good_practice_en.pdf.

EU Information Policy

Parliament granted access to information to security and defence documents

The Competitiveness Council approved on 14 November, a draft inter institutional agreement concerning access by Parliament to sensitive information held by the Council in the field of security and defence policy (*see Hot News October 2002, p. 8*).

In view of the specific nature and especially sensitive content of certain highly classified

information in the fields concerned, special arrangements are introduced for the handling of documents. The agreement will provide Parliament with treatment comparable to practices in the member states, where specific mechanisms govern the transmission and handling of classified information by governments and national parliaments.

New legislation to expand citizens' rights to environmental information

The Parliament and Council delegations reached agreement on 6 November on the new legislation that will give the public easier access to information on environmental matters held by public authorities and will improve the quality of the information supplied. Parliament's negotiators said it achieved many of Parliament's aims in strengthening the rights of citizens seeking information from national, regional or local authorities.

The crucial point of the negotiations was whether the new directive - the first of three designed to align EU law with the *UN 1998 Aarhus Convention* on information, decision-making and redress in environmental matters, should be tougher than the Convention itself. Parliament and Council have agreed that public

officials should be obliged actively to assist citizens seeking information. They also introduced quality standards to ensure that the information supplied is updated, accurate and reliable and a provision encouraging the use of IT in providing information. On the question of fees, both institutions agreed that, as a starting point, information should be provided for free but that charges, limited to "a reasonable amount", may be levied. A market-based charge can be made for information provided on a commercial basis.

Once both Parliament and Council have approved the new directive at third reading in December in Strasbourg, the directive must be implemented by the member states within two years.

EU Research and Development

Sixth Framework Programme (FP6)

The Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) continues the multidisciplinary approach introduced under the FP5 five years ago, and takes the logic of integration one step further. The latest edition of Euro abstracts, <http://www.cordis.lu/euroabstracts/en/home.html> offers a breakdown of the scientific challenges and priorities that will be directing EU-supported research over the next five years, and of some of the activities that will follow from them.

The IST priority is the biggest in the FP6 accounting for one fifth of its total budget. IST research will continue to drive forward the deployment and use of major infrastructure projects such as the Géant 10

gigabit-per-second research network that already covers 30 countries, and the networking of processing power through a 'World Wide Grid'.

Work under the Citizens and governance in a knowledge-based society priority will focus on social cohesion and governance in the transition to the knowledge-based society. The Commission will use its €225 million budget to support European-level studies, statistics and indicators, foster policy development and build up a research and data infrastructure.

FP6 online, <http://www.cordis.lu/fp6/>
http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/index_en.html

Submissions for review

Euro abstracts aims to review the key developments in publicly-funded research and innovation at European level, across all the themes of the FP6, and to keep non-specialists up to date with developments

outside their area. Researchers, scientific officers and programme managers who have publications to announce should contact t.johnson@esn.be.

Information Society

IDA programme will be open to candidate countries

From next year administrations in eleven candidate countries will be able to exchange data with EU member states' administrations on application of EU law, enforcement of internal market rules, and supply of eGovernment services across borders to citizens and enterprises.

The European Commission decided on that the system that allows interchange

of data between administrations - which has already been extended to Slovenia and Poland, will be open to Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Slovakia on 1 January 2003.

Turkey and Malta are also expected to follow in a matter of months.

eEurope, Invitation to submit expressions of interest

Following the endorsement of the eEurope 2005 action plan by the European Summit in Seville, the European Commission DG Enterprise invites the submission of expressions of interest to participate in the "European eBusiness support network for SMEs.

This initiative aims at bringing together eBusiness experts in Europe who are actively involved in the promotion of eBusiness for SMEs to share experience and good practice in helping SMEs to use effectively the

Internet as a business tool. In this sense, the European eBusiness support network aims at strengthening the dialogue between different eBusiness policy initiatives at European level.

Further information about this initiative, with guidance for submitters and the relevant application form, is available at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/ict/policy/e-bus-snfsme.htm> or email entr-EoI-e-business@cec.eu.int.

eEurope 2005, Benchmarking indicators for education and training systems

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Raising steadily the participation in lifelong learning is probably one of the most important challenges for us all in the field of education and training.

The current EU-average is of 8,4% (meaning that for any period of a month, 8,4% people will have participated in education and training

activities), with an average of 19,6% for the 3 best performing member states - the United Kingdom, Finland and Denmark)".

The communication can be downloaded from http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2002/com2002_0655en01.pdf.

eEurope 2005 Benchmarking Indicators

Internet indicators

Citizens' access to and use of the Internet

Enterprises' access to and use of ICTs

C. Internet access costs

Modern online public services

eGovernment

eLearning

eHealth

A dynamic eBusiness environment

Buying and selling on-line eBusiness readiness

A secure information infrastructure

Internet users' experience and usage regarding ICT-security

Broadband

Broadband penetration

Annual legislative and work programme for 2003

On 18 November, General affairs ministers took note of a presentation by the Commission of its legislative and work programme for the year 2003 (Press: 350 no 14183/02).

Commission President Romano Prodi also presented the work programme for 2003 to Parliament on 20 November, who will vote on 5 December in plenary. This is the first programme to be prepared following an in-depth dialogue between the three Institutions - Commission, Council and European Parliament, further to the presentation of the Annual Policy Strategy in February 2002.

The Commission's work programme is built around three priorities: making enlargement a success, security and stability (fight against terrorism, immigration policy, and new neighbours initiative) and a sustainable and inclusive economy (implementation of the EU's sustainable development strategy, the Lisbon strategy and Doha Development Agenda).

The full work programmes is available from http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2002/com2002_0590en01.pdf.

VAT on records and cassettes

Education ministers took note of a statement by the French delegation on the reduction of Value Added Tax (VAT) on records. The French position in favour of a reduced VAT rate on records and cassettes - Memorandum

of the French Government was published on 9 September 2002 and is available at http://www.eblida.org/FrenchPosition_VAT.pdf.

Europa Newsletter

The first issue of the Europa Newsletter, published on 18 November, is available at <http://europa.eu.int/newsletter/index.htm>. It will be issued every two weeks (next issue is due on 2 December) and will feature

information on hot issues, new website developments and forthcoming EU events and activities.

Feedback can be sent to press-newsletter@cec.eu.int.

Internal Market

SOLVIT Conference for European Business and Citizens Organisations

The main conclusions and a summary report on the SOLVIT conference for European business and citizens' organisations, which took place on 30 October in Brussels (see

Hot News October 2002, p.), are now available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/solvit/conference2002/report_en.htm.

Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research) Council configuration

The Competitiveness Council (Internal Market/Industry/Research) configuration was established at the initiative of the European Council at Seville (June 2002) as one of a number of changes aimed at improving the functioning of the Council in the run-up to the Union's enlargement.

At the same time, the merging of the former Internal Market, Industry and Research Councils is a response to the need for a

more coherent and better co-ordinated handling of matters related to the competitiveness of European companies. An updated version of the joint work programme is presented to the Council every six months. Future versions will relate more specifically to the Competitiveness Council itself, with its broad field of responsibilities, although the current edition still concentrates essentially on the internal market.

Internal Market Scoreboard

The European Commission's latest Internal Market Scoreboard (scoreboard no 11 - Ten Years Internal Market without frontiers, 11 November 2002) shows that the implementation deficit has started to grow again, rising from 1.8% in May 2002 to 2.1%. This deficit is the percentage of EU Internal Market laws currently in force which member states have not yet passed into national law even though the deadline agreed by the European Parliament and Council of Ministers has passed.

Only five member states (Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Netherlands and UK) now meet the European Council's target of a deficit of 1.5 % or less. France, Greece and Portugal have a deficit of more than double that target. In addition, the Scoreboard underlines that

more work is needed to complete the Internal Market in other ways.

The total number of Internal Market infringement proceedings remains high at more than 1,500 open cases. France and Italy continue to have the highest number of cases pending against them, together accounting for nearly 30% of all cases. Only Denmark has managed to reduce the number of infringement proceedings relating to misapplication of secondary legislation by 10% or more. Most others have seen their numbers go up. Moreover, over half of all cases take more than 2 years to be resolved.

The full text of the scoreboard and detailed survey results are available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/en/update/score/index.htm.

Patentability of computer-implemented inventions

The Council examined a draft common approach on the proposal for a directive aimed at harmonising member states' patent laws as regards computer-implemented inventions. The Council agreed that work would be taken forward on the basis of this text once the Parliament has given its opinion in first reading.

The proposal is aimed at ending legal uncertainty and removing obstacles to trade within the internal market as a result of differing practices whereby computer-implemented inventions can be patented by the European Patent Office (EPO) or by national patent offices but the detailed provisions vary from one member state to another.

Community Patent, jurisdictional arrangements

Competitiveness ministers examined the jurisdictional arrangements for the proposed Community patent system on 14 November. Following debate, it noted that further work was necessary on the jurisdictional system and on the dossier as a whole; the dossier will be on the Council's agenda at its session on 26 November.

The Community patent system, which is provided for in a proposal for a Council regulation, is aimed at creating a single patent that would be valid throughout the Community.

Patents would be granted by the European Patent Office (EPO) in Munich in accordance with the requirements and procedures laid down in the European Patent Convention (EPC) and its implementing regulation.

On 10 April 2002, Parliament voted 256 to 187 with 95 abstentions in favour of a resolution approving the Commission's proposal for a regulation to create a Community patent, together with a number of non-binding amendments. Download the report (A5-0059/2002) at http://www.europarl.eu.int/plenary/default_en.htm, under latest reports.

*Co decision procedure
Awaiting vote in plenary*

*Consultation procedure
Awaiting final decision*

Mutual recognition of the regulated professions to ensure free movement

The Competitiveness Council held on 14 November, a policy debate on the proposal for a directive aimed at clarifying and consolidating existing Community provisions on professional qualifications whilst maintaining the rights and guarantees contained in those provisions. The debate focused in particular on the following issues:

- simplification of committee structures and legislative texts and the avoidance of multiple use of similar or identical provisions;
- improvements aimed at ensuring the freedom to provide services;
- guarantees aimed at allowing temporary and occasional cross-frontier provision of services on the basis of the home country title;
- Initiatives for informing and supporting migrants seeking professional recognition.

The main objectives of the proposal are:

- a contribution to flexible labour and services markets;
- consolidation and simplification by consolidating into a single directive the twelve main directives covering the professions of doctor, general care nurse, dental practitioner, veterinary surgeon, midwife, pharmacist and architect, as well as the three "General System" directives;
- improved management (one single regulatory committee in place of the two existing committees, with additional implementing powers);
- improved information and advice to citizens with regard to recognition of professional qualifications.

Parliament's working document is available at

<http://www.europarl.eu.int/meetdocs/committees/juri/20021127/460027EN.pdf>.

Co decision procedure

Trade Policy

EU annual report on US Trade Barriers highlights need for enhanced co-operation

On 20 November, the European Commission released its eighteenth annual report on barriers to trade and investment in the US, providing an overview of the obstacles that EU exporters and investors face in the US. A number of impediments, ranging from tariff and non-tariff barriers to difference in legal and regulatory systems need to be tackled.

Since the last report, a number of developments in US trade policy have raised concerns in the EU e.g. the US failure to comply with a number of WTO Dispute Settlement findings (FSC/ETI scheme; 1916 Antidumping Act; Section 110 of the US Copyright Act).

The Commission believes that the best way to address the remaining barriers is by deepening the bilateral co-operation with US authorities. Further results are expected in short and medium-term with the intensified co-operation foreseen in the Positive Economic Agenda adopted at the summit on 2 May 2002.

The report can be downloaded from http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/mk_access/ustbr2002.pdf. There is also a limited print run which can be ordered from the European Commission, DG Trade, fax: +32 2 296 73 93
Press release, http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/bilateral/usa/pr201102_en.htm.

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Council Press Office Newsroom,
<http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/newmain.asp?lang=1>
EUR-Lex: European Union law <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/>
Europa, <http://europa.eu.int/>
European Parliament Press Service
http://www.europarl.eu.int/press/index_en.htm
RAPID - Press and Communication Service of the European Commission,
<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/welcome.htm>
Various mailing lists

Calls for Tenders are published in the **S** series of the OJ as well as in the Tenders Electronic Daily database TED, <http://ted.europa.eu.int/CD/application/pif/resources/shtml/common/home/home.html>.
EBLIDA Hot News electronic provides links to calls and programmes!

Calls are in general published in the **C** series of the Official Journal (OJ) of the European Communities, which comprises information and notices issued by the institutions of the Union, such as preparatory legislative documents and questions put by Members of Parliament to the Commission and Council.

The **C** series is available on-line via EUR-Lex, <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/>. Please note that the **CE** edition of the Official Journal, which is only available online, now publishes the explanatory statement for all Commission proposals. Henceforth the two-column presentation of the amended proposal will be replaced by two columns of continuous text. The text that has been deleted in the amended proposal will be struck through with a line, and new or replacement text will be underlined.

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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