



February 2004

# EBLIDA Hot News

The EBLIDA newsletter on EU library & information society issues

## Highlights:

- Parliament add extra safeguards to professional qualifications, p.1
- New EBLIDA working group on Professional Education, p. 2
- Commission proposed Decision for the eContent plus programme, p. 10

## Education

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### Parliament add extra safeguards to professional qualifications

Parliament adopted on 11 February the Zappalà report on the recognition of professional qualifications, with a bulky number of amendments. According to the proposed directive, any nationals of a member state legally established in a given member state may, in principle, provide services on a temporary and occasional basis in another member state under their original professional title without having to apply for recognition of their qualifications. They would, however, have to comply with certain obligations to provide the recipients of the services and the administration concerned with information.

Five years after its entry into force, the Commission is required to evaluate how the 'levels' system of professional qualifications of

the diplomas works in practice. If there were evident differences between the member states, Parliament would ask the Commission to come forward with proposals for a points and credit system linked to the quality and contents of the education and professional training in the different member states.

Parliament added some new provisions on the validity of diplomas. There is a definition for the term "*liberal profession*" and a new article to make a distinction between '*free provision of services*' and '*freedom of establishment*'; consumers must be provided with explanations concerning professional qualifications.

A service provider will benefit from the same rights and be subject to the same

*Continued in Page 7*

## Information Society

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### eEurope 2005 Mid-term Review

[http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/eeurope/2005/doc/all\\_about/acte\\_en\\_version\\_finale.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/2005/doc/all_about/acte_en_version_finale.pdf)

The European Commission published on 18 February its mid-term progress report on the eEurope 2005 action plan (COM (2004)0108). The mid-term review outlines areas where the action plan should now be fine tuned. Future priorities could include focusing on interoperability, standards and multi-platform access to make sure networks and devices can talk to each other, learning from practical experiences in other Member States, focusing on content for new high speed services and developing businesses models for eServices.

The Report focuses on progress in seven areas: eGovernment, eLearning, eHealth, and eBusiness, broadband, security and eInclusion. Despite positive signs, more

effort is needed to share experience and to tailor services to user needs rather than just focusing on installing new technology or applications. This also requires strong political leadership.

A thorough evaluation of the impact of eEurope 2005 will take place during 2004. The Commission has invited Member States and acceding Countries to give comments and play an active role in the process of revising the action plan by June 2004.

Further information on the eEurope 2005 mid-term review can be found at [http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/eeurope/2005/all\\_about/mid\\_term\\_review/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/2005/all_about/mid_term_review/index_en.htm).

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## Lobbying for archives and libraries

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### EBLIDA Executive Committee in Ljubljana

[http://www.eblida.org/eblida/meetings/executive/Ljubljana\\_info.htm](http://www.eblida.org/eblida/meetings/executive/Ljubljana_info.htm)

The EBLIDA Executive Committee held its last meeting in Ljubljana (Slovenia) from 27 to 28 February 2004. The location was chosen following the EBLIDA wish to get acquainted with and learn of the current situation of the library community in accession countries. See agenda at:

[http://www.eblida.org/eblida/meetings/executive/ljubljana\\_feb04\\_agenda.htm](http://www.eblida.org/eblida/meetings/executive/ljubljana_feb04_agenda.htm).

The Executive Committee members were hosted by the Slovenian National and University Library and had the opportunity to meet, amongst other Slovenian colleagues, with Ms Melita Ambro (Deputy Director of NUK) and Ms Irena Sesek (Union of Associations of Slovenian Libraries), in order to exchange points of views as regards

European matters and the Slovenian library system.

EBLIDA wish to thank our Slovenian colleagues for their support and warm welcome in Ljubljana and look forward to continuing further cooperation on issues of common interest. Special thanks to Ms Breda Carun for her support with the practical arrangements!

The next meeting of the EBLIDA Executive Committee will take place in Estoril (Portugal) on 13 May, prior to the EBLIDA annual Council meeting.

As of May 2004, future locations to hold further Executive meetings will be selected within the ten new EU members.

### New EBLIDA Working Group on Professional Education

Amongst other issues, the EBLIDA Executive Committee decided to develop the establishment of a new EBLIDA Working Group on Professional Education.

While the group will remain open to those members who wish to join, it will start of with the participation of the following EBLIDA members:

- Ms Sue Brown, Chair [CILIP, UK]
- Ms María Pía González Pereira [EBLIDA Director]
- Ms Kristina Virtanen [Helsinki City Library, Finland]
- Mr Eloy Rodrigues [BAD, Portugal]
- Ms Tove Pemmer Saetre [Norwegian Library Association, Norway]
- Ms Britt Marie Häggström [DIK, Sweden]

The Associazione Italiana Biblioteche (AIB) and the Danmarks Biblioteksforening - the Italian and Danish Library Associations respectively, have already expressed their interest in participating in this EBLIDA Working Group.

María Pía González Pereira will convene the group for a first meeting in early autumn. Further information on progress and dates will be announced via the EBLIDA website, EBLIDA mailing list and in *Hot News*, our monthly newsletter.

Should you require further details or wish to express your interest in joining the group! Please do not hesitate to contact the EBLIDA Secretariat at [eblida@debibliotheken.nl](mailto:eblida@debibliotheken.nl) or EBLIDA Director, María Pía González Pereira at [gonzalez.pereira@debibliotheken.nl](mailto:gonzalez.pereira@debibliotheken.nl).

## Audiovisual

### MEDIA programmes extended to 2006

By adopting two reports by MEP Vattimo (MEDIA Training - A5-0027/2004) and MEP Veltroni (MEDIA Plus - A5-0028/2004), Parliament approved on 12 February the Commission's proposal to extend in their current form the MEDIA programmes by one year to 31 December 2006.

As well as the budgetary changes proposed by the Commission, Parliament increased the budget by a further € 2 million for MEDIA Training (overall budget € 57.40 m) and a further € 18 million for MEDIA Plus (overall budget € 435.60 m), in line with the revised Financial Perspective for

enlargement. In addition, Parliament called for the Commission to provide full and detailed assessment reports on the MEDIA Training and Plus programmes no later than 31 December 2005. Both reports, awaiting Council common position, 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.

Moreover, the European Commission presented on 15 December 2003 conclusions on the regulatory framework (COM (2003)784) and will propose a new generation of programmes in a separate document in the first quarter of 2004 to follow up the present MEDIA programmes.

*Co decision procedure  
Second reading*

### Parliament seminar on threats to pluralism in the media

<http://www.europarl.eu.int/meetdocs/committees/libe/20040218/524600en.pdf>

The Parliament Committee on Citizens' Freedoms and Rights held on 19 February a seminar entitled *'Threats to Pluralism - The need for measures at the European level'* prior to its report on the risks of violation of freedom of expression and information (Article 11(2) of the Charter of Fundamental Rights). The report, to be drafted by MEP Boogerd-Quaak in April, will examine whether there are sufficient risks of violation of freedom of information within the EU member states and the accession countries to justify an intervention at the EU level.

In its **Green Paper on Pluralism** (1992), the European Commission did not examine possible deficiencies in national systems. The Rapporteur hopes to have sufficient information concerning the level of pluralism to prompt the Commission to update the Green Paper and to carry out a

thorough examination into the level of pluralism in the member states. She also hopes to give several recommendations to the Commission and the member states based on the outcomes of the seminar. The seminar focused on horizontal issues which are most important, namely the threats to pluralism, the possibility for protecting pluralism in a changing environment and the tools for protecting pluralism.

Parliament has commissioned the European Institute for the Media to carry out a study on the duties of the media and the institutions faced with the right of citizens to be fully and objectively informed which first results are expected in March. The study will examine the legislative and regulatory framework in EU fifteen and the accession countries e.g. rules on the media ownership, existence of codes of conduct of journalists.

## Consumer Protection

### Green paper on measures to simplify and speed up small claims litigation

The European Commission adopted in 2002 a Green Paper to launch a wide-ranging consultation of interested parties on a European order for payment procedure and on measures to simplify and speed up small

claims litigation with all interested parties at Community level (the conversion of the **1980 Rome Convention** on the law applicable to contractual obligations into a Community instrument and its modernisation).

## Consumer Protection

### Green paper on measures to simplify and speed up small claims litigation

*Own-initiative report  
Procedure terminated*

Parliament adopted on 12 February a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by MEP Gargani on approximating civil procedural law in the EU and called on the Commission to bring all the relevant rules together in a single regulation as regards the Green Paper on the conversion of the **1980 Rome Convention**.

Parliament declared that when the parties choose the law of a non-member country, mandatory Community law rules must be

enforced if all the elements of a contract, or the particularly significant elements, are situated on Union territory; application of the international conventions to which a member state is or will be party should not be affected; when specifying which law should apply to the effects of assignment of a claim, reference should be made to the law of the place where the assignor is domiciled. The report (*A5-0041/04*) 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.

### Council common position on enforcement order for uncontested claims

The ECOFIN Council adopted on 6 February, by written procedure, its common position on a Regulation creating a European Enforcement Order (EEO) for uncontested claims to permit, by laying down minimum standards, the free circulation of judgements, court settlements and authentic instruments throughout all member states without any intermediate proceedings needing to be brought in the member state of enforcement prior to recognition and enforcement.

The Commission in turn presented its modified proposal on 9 February (See COM (2004)0090, <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/>) and accepted the Council common position which, although modifying some specific features of the initial proposal, remains faithful to the ambitious goal of the abolition of exequatur including any public policy-

related control and strikes a fair balance between a major simplification of cross-border enforcement for creditors and the adequate protection of the debtors' rights. The text allows a considerable proportion of decisions on civil and commercial claims to circulate freely and without any intermediate measures in member states other than the one where a judgment has been delivered as a prerequisite for enforcement there.

The Council common position is now awaiting Parliament second reading, scheduled for April. Meanwhile, the Legal Affairs committee held on 19 February a public hearing on cross border infringements, administrative cooperation and enforcement ([http://www.europarl.eu.int/hearings/20040219/juri/programme\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.eu.int/hearings/20040219/juri/programme_en.pdf)).

## Co-operation with third countries

### Parliament held a public hearing on dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean Area <http://www.europarl.eu.int/meetdocs/committees/cult/20040218/524300en.pdf>

On 18 February, the Culture committee held a public hearing on dialogue of peoples and cultures in the Euro-Mediterranean region. Topics discussed included intercultural dialogue - fundamental principles and principles for action; operational guidelines and specific proposals.

MEPs expressed concern at issues such as the role of education and the role of Europe in the Arab world crisis, the need for a European cultural policy or the extension of

the ERASMUS programme to Mediterranean countries.

A Euro-Med Youth Platform meeting will be held from 11 to 14 March in Amman to encourage more active participation in the Euro-Med Youth programme. Visit <http://www.euromedp.org>. In addition, Euro-Mediterranean Foreign affairs ministers will meet in Dublin on 5 and 6 May to focus on Chapters 1, 2 and 3 (Social, Cultural and Human Partnership).



## Culture

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### Commission results of consultation on future EU cultural cooperation available

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/archive/consult\\_pub\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/archive/consult_pub_en.html)

250 usable replies from European networks, local associations, museums, cultural contact points, foundations, ministries, regional bodies, professional bodies, trade unions, etc were received. Responses came from all member states, most candidate countries and Norway.

With regard to the question on whether the music and publishing industries could be taken specifically into account in Community

action, "certain contributions cast doubt on the need to support a sector they deem to be economically viable. Others see the boost this could provide for European culture, but express misgivings as to the EU's financial capacity to provide such support. Doubts have also been expressed as to the choice of these two sectors rather than other cultural industries which could also do with Community aid".

### Selected projects under Culture 2000

On behalf of the Commission, independent experts began on 16 February evaluation of the applications received under actions 1 and 2 of the Culture 2000 programme.

Based on their views, the Commission will make a selection and present it to the

programme management committee and then to the European Parliament.

Due to the new financial regulation, no information can be sent to the applicants before the end of the procedure, whether they have been selected or not.

### Projects under preparatory actions for cultural cooperation

*Budget heading B3-2007*

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/other\\_actions/exp\\_act/exp\\_act\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/other_actions/exp_act/exp_act_en.html)

Following the examination of the projects received in the context of the call for proposals under budget line "Preparatory actions for cultural cooperation" (see call for proposals published on 12 September 2003, [http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2003/c\\_217/c\\_21720030912en00070020.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2003/c_217/c_21720030912en00070020.pdf)), six projects have been selected, under four different themes.

They have various budgets and thus have received various EU grants. They are: **EFEMT** - European Forum of Music Education and Training; **Promoting European Music; ExTEND; ICDE** - Information Centre for Drama in Europe; **NonTVTVstation en Europe** and Cultural Heritage Action Zones (**CHAZ**).

### Action programme to fund European bodies active in culture

The Culture committee adopted on 19 February the report by MEP Iivari approving the Council's common position on funding bodies active at European level in the field of culture, subject to a few technical amendments aimed at bringing the agreement reached by Culture ministers into line with the agreement reached between Parliament and Council in the course of the budget conciliation. The committee also introduced transitional provisions to consider the fact that the act could not be adopted before the beginning of 2004.

In this way, beneficiaries would be able to claim a grant for the totality of their eligible costs in 2004.

The report (A5-0077/2004), awaiting Parliament second reading, 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. The Commission adopted on 9 January its assessment of the common position (see COM (2004)0003, <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/>).

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*Co decision procedure  
Second reading*

*Co decision procedure  
Second reading*

### Culture 2000 programme extension to 2006

[http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/pdf/2004/com2004\\_0079en01.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/pdf/2004/com2004_0079en01.pdf)

The European Commission presented in 2003 a proposal to extend the Culture 2000 programme unchanged for a further two years (2005- 2006), with a budget of € 69.5 million.

The Commission modified proposal on extending Culture 2000 was adopted on 10 February (See COM (2004)0079 at <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/>). It accepts the two amendments adopted by Parliament in plenary last December. The first, accepted in full, aims at introducing a new recital emphasising that the revision of the financial perspective allowing for enlargement provides for an increased ceiling for Heading 3 which has to be respected by the legislative authority when extending existing programmes.

On the other hand, the second was adopted only in principle; the part concerning the provision of a full detailed assessment report on the Culture 2000 programme was accepted, however the Commission did not agree that the report should be a condition for Parliament to consider the proposal for a new programme (otherwise it would not be considered until the end of 2005, although it is to be presented in the first quarter of 2004).

A new recital stating that the Commission should present a full detailed assessment report on the Culture 2000 programme not later than 31 December 2005 has been worded.

The proposal is now awaiting Council common position.

### Evaluation of the old programmes Ariane, Kaleidoscope and Raphael

Kaleidoscope, Ariane and Raphaël, the precursors of the Culture 2000 programme, were the subject of an independent evaluation carried out by GMV Conseil during 2003.

The full report is available in French at [http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/sources\\_info/pdf-word/rapportoctobre.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/sources_info/pdf-word/rapportoctobre.pdf).

In addition, the Commission adopted a report on these programmes on 23 January 2004, which is available in all official languages from

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/sources\\_info/studies\\_evaluation/studies\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/sources_info/studies_evaluation/studies_en.html).

Visit

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/culture2000/historique/historic\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/culture2000/historique/historic_en.html).

## Education

### Follow-up of Socrates and Leonardo programmes

Education ministers heard of a new generation of EU programmes proposed by the Commission to replace the Socrates and Leonardo programmes.

In addition, the Commission presented a report to the Council on the implementation of the recommendation on mobility (see COM (2004)0066 of 6 February at [http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2004/com2004\\_0066en01.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2004/com2004_0066en01.pdf)). The largest part of the report refers to progress on the implementation of the **2002 Action Plan for Skills and Mobility**. The

final part examines where good progress has been made, where it is still required and what additional areas for initiatives would be positive. Moreover, a Commission report on the follow-up to the recommendation on mobility can also be consulted at <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/> (COM (2004)0021 of 23 January 2004). Visit [http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/skills\\_mobility/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/skills_mobility/index_en.htm) (Skills and Mobility); Ploteus (<http://europa.eu.int/ploteus>) and European Job Mobility Information Portal (<http://europa.eu.int/eures>).

## Education

### Parliament add extra safeguards to professional qualifications

*Continued from Page 1*

obligations as the nationals of the host member state. Furthermore, a service provider practising a profession covered by *Chapter III (Title III)* will be subject to the rules of conduct of a professional or administrative nature which apply in the host member state. For this purpose a Member States may require automatic temporary registration. Where the profession that is subject to a special professional liability regime is regulated in the host member state but not in the member state of origin, the host may require full registration.

Several amendments are made to Annex V. In the case of a regulated profession, MEPs said that access to the profession should be allowed only where the qualifications were of the same level. However, if the level of training for admission to a profession has

been raised in the home member state, the host member state should allow professionals admitted by a lower level of qualification to be professionally recognised at the higher level.

This proposed directive, as amended by Parliament, will now be debated by the Council of Ministers, which is expected to adopt its common position in May.

The Zappalà report (*A5-470/2003*) 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. For further information see RAPID (IP/04/197, 12 February 2004) at <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/> and/or [http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/internal\\_market/en/qualifications/index.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/en/qualifications/index.htm).

*Co decision procedure  
Second reading*

### CONNECT, projects and results (1999-2002)

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/connect/result/index.cfm?Language=EN>

CONNECT, designed to strengthen synergy and links between education, training and culture with innovation, research and new technologies, was launched by Parliament in 1999 and implemented by the Commission between 1999 and 2002. After its end in 2002, the Commission decided to keep details of the outcomes and compiled, in conjunction with the project coordinators, a results database.

91 projects out of 511 submitted were co funded by the Commission with € 15

million. Joint actions focused on three major themes: building up learning communities, employability and active citizenship. Learning communities helped to open up the school to the outside world through cooperation between teachers and other qualified professionals e.g. social and cultural services, libraries, museums, etc.

The review of the CONNECT initiative can be consulted at [http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/connect/result/Bilan\\_EN.doc](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/connect/result/Bilan_EN.doc).

### Education and Training 2010

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/et\\_2010\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/et_2010_en.html)

Education ministers approved on 26 February a report on the implementation of a work programme which follows up the Lisbon strategy objectives regarding education and training systems in Europe.

The report, to be submitted to the European Council in March, presents progress made and proposes measures to be taken for further improvements. It also summarises the main guidelines for action. With regard to lifelong learning, it is necessary to promote partnerships among businesses,

social partners and education institutions at all levels for the development of national lifelong learning strategies, including e.g. validation of prior learning; creation of open, attractive and accessible learning environments.

The next steps would involve further work to improve indicators, a new generation of programmes to be established for 2007-2013 and the submission of a further interim report in 2006. See the report at [http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/jir\\_council\\_final.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/jir_council_final.pdf).



## Education

### Tempus programme, Commission report on its second phase (1994-2000)

The Commission presented on 16 February its final report on the second phase of the TEMPUS programme, which examines the role of TEMPUS in stimulating the reforms in the countries eligible to take part and its impact in those countries.

It follows the interim report of March 1998 and it is based on the findings and conclusions of the independent evaluator's report. ECORYS Nederland BV carried out the evaluation between October 2002 and July 2003. The final report was submitted to the Commission in October and finally

approved in December 2003.

Amongst others, the report suggests a number of areas to be further investigated e.g. the process of embedding the newly developed courses into the regular curricula; the barriers opposing effective dissemination of TEMPUS results; the employability issue and the relations of TEMPUS with industry and the private sector and lastly its impact on the phenomenon of the 'brain drain'.

See COM (2004)0109 of 16 February at <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/>.

### Parliament report on role of schools in providing access to culture

#### Paragraph 21

**“Urges the improvement of quality and access to the pedagogical services of museums, theatres, libraries and other cultural structures; calls on schools to open themselves up to these cultural centres and institutions, contacts and exchanges which can only be mutually beneficial and that they ensure that posters, catalogue cards and leaflets are worded in a least one of the official languages of the Union”**

On 26 February, Parliament adopted a report by MEP Graça Moura on the role of public education in maximising access to culture (A5-0080/2004, [http://www.europarl.eu.int/plenary/default\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.eu.int/plenary/default_en.htm), under latest reports). The report presents recommendations to member states e.g. increasing investment in education, ensuring that pupils can learn two languages other than their own, etc; it also criticises the tendency for history lessons to focus exclusively on 20<sup>th</sup> century events.

Parliament suggested that the Commission

develop material on the history of European culture which, if approved by the Council, could be available to all member states who wished to use it in their education systems. In the context of enlargement, MEPs pointed out that there was a need to raise awareness within the EU member states of the history and culture of Central and Eastern European countries and vice versa. Lastly, the committee stressed that music; fine arts and theatre were a fundamental component of Europe's cultural heritage and should be given a higher priority in school education.

### Euro pass for the transparency of qualifications and skills

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/europass/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/europass/index_en.html)

Education ministers debated on 26 February a proposed Decision establishing a single framework for the transparency of diplomas, qualifications and competences – **Euro pass**. The Council requested the Permanent Representatives Committee (COREPER) to run further work to enable it to reach a political agreement, if possible, at its meeting on 27 May.

This draft Decision would build on and

replace the legal framework provided for by Decision 1999/51/EC (*OJ L 17, 22 January 1999, p. 45*). It was forwarded to Council and Parliament on 17 December 2003 (co decision procedure). Parliament will put its report to vote at plenary session in April this year.

The core of the Euro pass portfolio would be the European CV, to which the other Euro pass documents would be linked.

*Own-initiative report  
Procedure terminated*

*Co decision procedure  
First reading*

## Enlargement

### European Ministerial Conference on Information Society

<http://www.emcis2004.hu/dokk/main/emc/conference>

The Irish Presidency, the Hungarian Government and the European Commission organised a conference entitled "New Opportunities for Growth in an Enlarged Europe" in Budapest on 26 and 27 February.

The event provided an opportunity to conclude the commitments undertaken by acceding and candidate countries within the eEurope+ Action Plan and with the efforts taken by the EU-fifteen within the framework of the eEurope 2005 mid-term review.

High-level government representatives agreed on what key areas needed to be

addressed. Amongst others are further cooperation in research and development; the development and promotion of rich, linguistically and culturally diversified, web-based content and services for all Europeans; the provision of modern online public services in the areas of eGovernment, eLearning and eHealth; and digital inclusion for all Europeans.

The conference conclusions as well as the eEurope+ 2003 final progress report can be consulted at

<http://www.emcis2004.hu/dokk/main/emc/conference/proceedings>.



## EU Research and Development

### 1999-2003, a 5-year assessment required by Article 6 of FP6 is underway

[http://europa.eu.int/information\\_society/programmes/evaluation/ist\\_rtd/5\\_year\\_assessment/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/information_society/programmes/evaluation/ist_rtd/5_year_assessment/index_en.htm)

In late 2004, the Commission is expected to decide a new work programme for the IST priority (2005-2006), and later in 2005 to propose a framework for RTD beyond 2006. Wide consultation is thus underway and should be finalised this spring at the latest.

The 1999-2003 assessment aims at assessing the implementation, effectiveness, achievements and impacts of investment as well as the evolution, perspectives, options and requirements for future IST

development.

A set of preparatory studies encompassing impact assessments of the IST Programme as well as contextual and methodological studies are underway. A panel of 5-7 independent highly qualified experts will be appointed; it will work by consensus and be supported by professional evaluators. The panel will issue a report with main findings, conclusions and recommendations by March 2004.

### Consultation in FP6 for Work Programme 2005-2006

[http://www.cordis.lu/ist/directorate\\_d/cnt/pubar/consult\\_a\\_fp6.htm](http://www.cordis.lu/ist/directorate_d/cnt/pubar/consult_a_fp6.htm)

A public consultation of interested sector players was organised in the context of the IST programme, covering the strategic objectives of:

**2.3.1.3 - Broadband for All,**

**2.3.1.4 - Mobile and Wireless Systems beyond 3 G**

**2.3.1.8 - Networked Audiovisual Systems**  
of the current version of the IST Work Programme 2003-2004.

The consultation aims at reviewing these areas and considering whether any changes to the text are appropriate for the Work Programme 2005-2006, which will become the basis for future calls for proposals.

Web submissions could be submitted until 20 February 2004 and will be used to organise a consultation meeting in April.

## Information Society

### Commission proposed Decision for the eContent plus programme

*Co decision procedure  
First reading*

The Commission presented on 13 February, a draft decision to establish a Community programme to make digital content more accessible, usable and exploitable at Community level, facilitating the creation and diffusion of information and knowledge in areas of public interest.

Europe has barriers e.g. multiplicity of languages, cultures and, practices of public administration and enterprises in relation to the uptake of digital content. This is why the Commission is proposing the adoption of a financial support programme to make digital content in Europe more accessible.

The programme focuses on the end-user and envisages three operational goals: facilitating access to European digital content; improving quality; and reinforcing cooperation and awareness between digital

content stakeholders. The proposed financial envelope for its implementation is € 163 million covering a four-year period (2005-2008).

Amongst the lines of action is 'Facilitating access to, use and exploitation of digital content'. Focus will be on **promoting the emergence of trans-European information infrastructures for accessing and using high quality European digital cultural and scientific resources through the linking of virtual libraries, community memories, etc.**

The draft decision has been forwarded to Parliament and Council. Parliament's vote in plenary is scheduled for April. The Rapporteur is MEP van Velzen. See COM (2004)0096 (SEC (2004)0169) at <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/>.

### Civic participation of European citizens

*2558<sup>th</sup> General Affairs Council meeting, (5518/04 (Press 25))*

The Council adopted on 26 January a Decision establishing a Community action programme aimed at granting financial support to bodies working in the field of active European citizenship and at promoting civic participation.

This programme aims at bringing EU citizens closer to the EU institutions and at intensifying the links between citizens of different countries, in particular by way of town-twinning schemes.

### Commission presents new eLearning projects

[http://www.cordis.lu/ist/directorate\\_e/telearn/projects\\_fp6.htm](http://www.cordis.lu/ist/directorate_e/telearn/projects_fp6.htm)

Eight new eLearning projects have been selected for funding under the first call for proposals of the FP6 IST programme. The projects, which together gather 181 participants from 28 countries, aim at advancing technology standards, creating new models for collaboration in blended learning and smoothing the traditional borders between formal and informal learning contexts.

The selected projects are: **CONNECT** - Designing the classroom of Tomorrow by using advanced technologies to connect formal and informal environments; **LE ACTIVE MATH** - Language-Enhanced, User Adaptive, Interactive eLearning for Mathematics ([www.learactivemath.org](http://www.learactivemath.org)); **TELCERT** - Technology Enhanced

Learning Certification - European Requirements & Testing; **UNFOLD** - Understanding Networks of Learning Design; **ELeGI** - European Learning GRID Infrastructure. Its central aspect is social learning. The technology used will be an open Grid service architecture, which implies full exploitation of emerging networking facilities and location-transparent access to advanced and distributed software solutions such as digital libraries; **iCLASS** - Intelligent Distributed Cognitive-based Open Learning Systems for Schools; **KALEIDOSCOPE** - Concepts and methods for exploring the future of learning with digital technologies and **PROLEARN** - Network of Excellence Professional Learning ([www.prolearn-project.org](http://www.prolearn-project.org)).

## Information Society

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### Access to the Information Society for deaf people

A conference on the development of an EU-wide strategy to ensure that people with disabilities, particularly deaf and hard of hearing people, have improved access to electronic communications networks, services and terminals took place in Brussels on 26 February. The conference, organised by the Royal National Institute for the Deaf (RNID), aimed at enabling people with disabilities to make the most of new services and devices e.g. third generation mobile

telephony, digital TV, online services. Final results will contribute to follow up the Commission's action plan for people with disabilities and help shaping, with the help of users, a European accessibility policy which addresses regulation, research and standardisation.

Further information: [www.ictrnid.org.uk](http://www.ictrnid.org.uk) or [www.w3.org/WAI](http://www.w3.org/WAI).

### WSIS, the EU towards a global partnership in the Information Society

The European Commission issued a communication on 26 February on the Declaration of Principles and Plan of Action adopted by UN Member States in Geneva during the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) in December 2003. The

communication proposes ways to organise inputs for the second phase, which will bring the Plan of Action to life with specific programmes and culminate in a WSIS summit meeting in Tunis in 2005. Visit <http://www.itu.int/wsis/>.

## Internal Market

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### Commission seeks views on accession to the Hague Agreement

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal\\_market/en/indprop/design/2004-consult.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/en/indprop/design/2004-consult.htm)

The Hague Agreement concerning the International Deposit of Industrial Designs offers owners of industrial designs a simplified means of applying for protection of a design in several countries by submitting a single international application.

Agreement which entered into force on 23 December 2003.

The Commission is seeking views on accession to the international deposit system. Contributions should be sent **before 30 April 2004** to the European Commission, DG Internal Market (E.2), C100 5/027, B-1049 Brussels; email: [Markt-E2@cec.eu.int](mailto:Markt-E2@cec.eu.int).

The EC meets the conditions to become party to the Geneva Act (1999) of the Hague

## Internet

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### TWISTER moves to close the 'digital divide'

One of the first Integrated Projects funded under the *Aeronautics and Space* FP6 priority is to play a leading role in bringing broadband telecommunications to a wider European public.

Launched on 1 February, TWISTER will support the development of seamless broadband coverage in rural areas, bridging the so-called 'digital divide'.

Led by EADS Astrium, TWISTER (Terrestrial Wireless Infrastructure integrated with Satellite Telecommunications for E-Rural) will mobilise some of Europe's leading expertise in the area with an overall budget of €8.5 million, of which €5 million will be funded by the Commission.

Innovative applications will be supported in more than 100 validation sites throughout Europe (Spain, France, Sweden, Poland, Greece, Malta, others) over a three-year period. Applications will be aimed at meeting specific needs of rural user communities in agriculture, education, community services, health care and eBusiness.

### Safer Internet Day celebrated on 6 February

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

On 6 February, the Safer Internet Day took place across Europe, focusing on children's rights to a safer Internet. This included the availability of information for children and safer internet interaction.

CEN established a workshop on data protection and privacy in 2003. Within this

workshop, work has been proposed to develop common criteria for web seals programmes to increase website confidence.

Visit the Internet Content Rating Association - *ICRAPlus*, launched in November 2003, <http://www.icra.org/>.

### eEurope 2005, European Network and Information Security Agency

On 19 February, the Justice and Home Affairs Council adopted at first reading a Regulation establishing the European Network and Information Security Agency, as amended by Parliament (*19 November 2003*).

The European Network and Information Security Agency is intended to assist the

Commission and Member States in meeting requirements set out in present and future Community legislation regarding network and information security; the Agency will be operational for an initial period of five years and will be located in Greece.

The Regulation is awaiting publication in the Official Journal.

## Telecommunications

### Telecommunications services into the European Economic Area

The ECOFIN Council adopted on 20 January two Decisions establishing the Community position to incorporate recently adopted *acquis* in the field of Telecommunications services into the European Economic Area Agreement (EEA):

- Commission Decision 2002/627/EC (29 July 2002) establishing the **European Regulators Group for Electronic Communications Networks and Services**;

- Commission Decision 2002/622/EC (26 July 2002) establishing a **Radio Spectrum Policy Group**.

The Council common position on the regulation laying down rules for the granting of financial aid to trans-European networks (amending Council Regulation (EC) no 2236/95), adopted on 24 February, does not concern the eTENs priority projects (TELECOM) for which the Commission has made a separate proposal.

### Commission report on recent developments in the electronic communications

The European Commission presented on 3 February its 2004 spring report to recall the importance of information society policies to improve competitiveness and to invite Parliament and Council to take action in those sectors that are considered to be of strategic importance for European growth. The Council is also invited to support the eEurope mid-term review process.

The communication highlights the need for sustained political commitment to improve the effective use of ICTs in the Union and identifies actions to remove barriers to further investment. Section two reviews the

reasons why ICTs are so important for growth and competitiveness. Section three looks at recent developments in the electronic communication sector, in particular in terms of broadband and 3G mobile communications, while section four reports on challenges and policy responses.

In particular the Commission will work with the relevant National Regulatory Authorities and with industry to address the issues possibly hampering the development of new innovative services e.g. DRM systems, interoperability, micro-payments. See COM (2004)0061 at <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/>.



## Trade Policy

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### VAT reduced rates

Following its agreement of 22 December 2003, ECOFIN ministers adopted on 10 February the Directive amending Directive 77/388/EEC to extend the facility allowing member states to apply VAT reduced rates to certain labour intensive services and the Decision extending the period of application of Decision 2000/185/EC authorising member states to apply a VAT reduced rate to certain labour intensive services in accordance with the procedure provided for in Article 28(6) of Directive 77/388/EEC.

In addition, ECOFIN ministers adopted on 26 January the Directive amending Directive 77/388/EEC concerning the common system of VAT, as regards conferment of implementing powers and the procedure for adopting derogations.

The Commission in turn, intends to present a non-paper shortly on the question of the relation between VAT base and VAT rates, the proper functioning of the internal market, and the principle of subsidiarity.

### EU trade sanctions will hit 1600 US goods

The EU will impose sanctions of € 290 million on the US for failing to repeal illegal tax breaks by the deadline of 1 March 2004, to be cranked up by €40m a month until the US complies.

The WTO ruled the so-called '**Foreign Sales Corporations**' (FSC) illegal in 2000 and Brussels will now retaliate with

sanctions of 5% on €4 billion of US goods.

Foreign ministers discussed the issue in the margins of talks on the Middle East. US Congress and Senate are moving to push through the necessary legislative changes on the FSC but a date to wrap up the legal steps has not yet been scheduled.

## Youth Policy

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### Follow-up to the White Paper on European Youth

Parliament adopted on 26 February a resolution based on the own-initiative report by MEP Gröner on the **White Paper on a New Impetus for European Youth**.

Parliament called on the Commission to pay particular attention to the Commission's information networks and a wider range of direct training and information events to be made available to providers of political

education for young people. Young people must be seen as a specific target group in planning and implementing information policy in the context of political and social life at European, national and local level.

The report (A5-0081) 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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*Own-initiative report  
Procedure terminated*

### European Youth action programme awaiting Parliament second reading

On 19 February, the Culture committee adopted the report by MEP Prets approving the Council's common position on a European youth action programme, subject to one amendment, which introduces transitional provisions to take into account that the act could not be adopted before the beginning of 2004, thus beneficiaries will not be able to sign a contract before 30 April 2004. In this way, beneficiaries would be able to claim a grant for the totality of their eligible costs in 2004.

The only significant discrepancy between Parliament and Council is whether grants to the international non-governmental youth organisations should be exempt from the principle of gradual reduction from the third year onwards.

The proposed programme is now awaiting Parliament second reading, scheduled for April. See the report (A5-0075/2004) 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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*Co decision procedure  
Second reading*

## EBLIDA, European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations

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### Information sources used include

Bulletin Quotidien Europe  
Council Press Office Newsroom,  
<http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/newmain.asp?lang=1>  
European Parliament Press Service  
[http://www.europarl.eu.int/press/index\\_en.htm](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>  
EUR-Lex: European Union law <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/>  
Europa, <http://europa.eu.int/>  
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 **C E** 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.

### About EBLIDA...

EBLIDA is the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations. We are an independent umbrella association of national library, information, documentation and archive associations and institutions in Europe.

Subjects on which EBLIDA concentrates are European information society issues, including copyright & licensing, culture & education and EU enlargement. We promote unhindered access to information in the digital age and the role of archives and libraries in achieving this goal.