



# Hot News March 2000

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### Copyright Directive: harmonising copyright and related rights

On 16 March 2000, the Internal Market Council took note of the state of work on the proposed directive, which is now moving from working party level to the Permanent Representatives Committee. The Council confirmed its intention of making all possible efforts to find a common position on 25 May, in Brussels.

The objective of the proposal is to adapt existing legislation on 'Copyright and related rights in the information society', given the possibilities offered by the new technologies of the 'digital age' and the Internet. This is to ensure that transmission of material protected by copyright from one EU country to another does not alter rights related to reproduction, communication to the public and distribution. This proposal will implement the main elements of the WIPO Copyright Treaty and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty, both concluded in 1996. Its adoption is a pre-condition for the ratification of these treaties by both the Community and the member states.

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#### WIPO Copyright Treaties: Awaiting Council common position

On 16 February, the European Parliament agreed on the Approval of the WIPO Copyright Treaty and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty.

On 16 March 2000, at the Internal Market Council meeting, the Council adopted the Decision concerning the approval of the WIPO Treaties. Both Treaties were adopted in Geneva on 20 December 1996 and have since been signed by each of the member states and also by the Community. They are intended to help ensure a balanced level of protection for works and other subject matter while allowing the public access to material available via networks.

As far as performances and phonograms are concerned, rightholders will be able to benefit from an exclusive right of reproduction, distribution, rental, and making available to the public (over networks) of their performances and phonograms. Moreover, performers and phonogram producers will also benefit from a right of remuneration for broadcasting and all other forms of communication to the public of phonograms published for commercial purposes. Just as in the Copyright Treaty, this Treaty sets out provisions on technological measures, on rights management systems and on the enforcement of rights.

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#### Data Protection: provisional agreement reached

On 14 March 2000, the European Union and the United States reached a provisional agreement on a package of arrangements known as the 'safe harbor' to ensure 'adequate' privacy protection for electronic personal data. This enables American companies to continue to receive data from Europe if they sign up to the principle of 'safe harbor'. The new regulations will apply to companies conducting e-commerce. It does not cover the financial services sector, still under discussion. The 'safe harbor' constitutes a bridge between the mainly self-regulatory approach of the US and the EU's law-based regime. John Mogg (Internal Market) and David Aaron (US Commerce under Secretary) settled on measures to ensure information sent to the US from the EU will be safeguarded under US law.

One major issue that has been clarified is the way in which the principles of data protection will be enforced in the US, and in particular the accuracy and reliability of the list of companies adhering to the 'safe harbor', and the possible sanctions for non-compliance. Another problem previously unresolved was the way in which existing US laws could be integrated into the arrangement.

Under the 'safe harbor' arrangement, the US Department of Commerce will establish a list of companies adhering to a set of data protection rules and related enforcement requirements, which the Commission has found to provide 'adequate' protection. Adherents to the 'safe harbor' will thus be secure against data blockages, EU businesses will know to which US companies they can transfer data without seeking other safeguards, while EU citizens will have the assurance that their data is being properly protected. To enjoy the benefits of this 'safe harbor', companies must bind themselves publicly to the 'safe harbor' principles.

On the EU side, the 'safe harbor' principles would be met by a formal decision recognising the 'adequate protection' standard, as required by the EU Data Protection Directive (1998) for transfers of personal data to third countries (Article 25.6). Before adopting a formal decision to this effect, the agreement of a qualified majority of member states and consultation with data protection commissioners and the European Parliament is required. Once adopted, the decision will be binding on all member states and so constitute a strong guarantee against the interruption of data flows from the EU to 'safe harbor' participants in the US.

Approval procedures will take some time, but the Commission hopes to be able to submit a formal proposal at the end of June or July. The US has agreed to guidelines to ensure American companies comply with EU rules and says it will make the regulators subject to US law. Companies will be reviewed in mid-2001 to see if they've complied with privacy laws.

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#### E-commerce Directive: Council common position adopted

On 28 February, the Council adopted its common position on the directive on e-commerce. The proposed directive seeks to ensure that the internal market principles of free movement of services and freedom of establishment also apply to Information Society services and that service providers can operate throughout the European Union beyond legal frontiers. It builds upon and completes a number of other initiatives (regulatory transparency mechanism, protection of personal data, legal protection of conditional access services, electronic signatures) that together will eliminate the remaining legal obstacles to the online provision of services. This directive applies solely to providers operating from within the Union.

The common position incorporates most of the amendments adopted by Parliament at first reading and has maintained the balance of the amended proposal. However, the Commission and the Council have adopted a different position from that adopted by Parliament at first reading. The most significant changes concern the complete deletion of comitology in all relevant areas (procedures which govern relations between the Commission and the committees, based on models set out in a Council Decision -"comitology" Decision) and the treatment of electronic contracts. Principle changes made to the Commission proposal relate to:

- liability of intermediate providers. It emerges that the balance proposed by the Commission is the product of an arrangement between the two parties most concerned - beneficiaries and intermediate providers;
- consumer protection;
- the relationship of the draft Directive with international private law: the Council has considered it necessary to clarify the relationship of the draft Directive's provisions on home country control with provisions of international private law, in particular the existing Brussels and Rome Conventions;
- cybercrime and protection of minors;
- fixed book prices: e-commerce impacts on the book market in the same way that it does on the market for any other product which is saleable on the internet. The directive as such has no bearing, however, on the application of fixed book price schemes introduced in some member states via legislation or by arrangement between the parties concerned.

In order to facilitate rapid adoption of the Directive, which is a matter of urgency, the Commission has accepted these changes to its amended proposal. This common position was forwarded to the European Parliament for its second reading on 2 March.

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#### Public sector information: COR opinion on the Green Paper

The opinion of the Committee of the Regions (COR) on the Commission's Green Paper on Public sector information in the information society, entitled 'Public sector information: a key resource for Europe' was published on 29 February. The COR supports the right of European citizens to have access to the information that affects their daily lives.

The COR says that the Commission 'may wish to reflect on the most appropriate channels for providing information and to whom the information should be addressed'. The need for protection and privacy of personal data is also noted in the opinion.

It proposes a number of pilot local and regional authorities across the member states be selected to report to the Commission on how principles of access could be translated into reality and on whether it would be possible to achieve greater commonality in information provision. For further information please refer to *Official Journal no C57 of 29 February 2000, p.11*

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#### Culture 2000 Programme: Cities of Culture

Nine cities have been chosen as European Cities of Culture for the year 2000: Avignon, Bergen, Bologna, Brussels, Krakow, Helsinki, Prague, Reykjavik and Santiago de Compostela. Throughout the year, these cities will organise events intended to highlight the wealth of cultures and creation in Europe. Each will receive financial backing from the European Union, in the framework of the new Culture 2000 programme. The European Cities of Culture are a way of encouraging co-operation between people involved in culture in the areas of live performances, theatre, historical monuments, urban culture, street arts and the new forms of artistic expression that use the new technologies.

More than 70 co-operation projects will be run in the year 2000. The preparation phase of some projects have been supported through Community funding. More information on the European cities of culture can be found at: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/capeurcult\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/capeurcult_en.html)

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#### Fifth Framework Programme: 'Improving human potential' research area

43 socio-economic research projects have been selected for support by the European Commission out of nearly 200 applications submitted under the key action 'Improving the socio-economic knowledge base', which is part of the 'Improving human research potential' horizontal research programme. They tackle some of the crucial issues which affect the lives of European citizens today such as finance, economy, technology, governance, citizenship and European integration.

Research Commissioner Philippe Busquin said that 'this new key action will in fact be a dynamic research process, responding to emerging challenges, and fostering a dialogue between researchers and policy-makers'. More information on this programme can be found at <http://www.cordis.lu/improving/>

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#### Fifth Framework Programme: 'Environment and sustainable development' programme

In February 2000, the Commission approved a first set of 165 projects on 'Environment and sustainable development', one of the four thematic programmes of the Fifth Framework Programme (1998-2002). Its overall goal is to support sustainable economic development and competitiveness, improved urban management and integrated planning policy, and help safeguard and improve the quality of life and cultural identity of citizens. This first call for proposals concerned several key actions. Under the key action "City of Tomorrow and Cultural Heritage" 17 projects were chosen out of 137 proposals, which will receive EU funding of Euro 17.6 million. More information on this programme can be found at <http://www.cordis.lu/eesd/>

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#### INTERREG Initiative: European Parliament adopted report

On 15 February, with the adoption of the report by Mr Decourrière on the resolution recommending the approval of the new INTERREG initiative, that aims to promote regional cross-border co-operation, the European Parliament marked its agreement on the priority granted to Interreg III and on the financial allocation earmarked for it - Euro 4.875 billion for the period 2000-2006. However, the report stresses the need to concentrate on the remote regions and for closer co-operation with regions in Eastern Europe. Among the amendments that were adopted was one calling for particular attention to be paid to countries sharing a common border with the European Union.

The European Parliament calls on the Commission to co-ordinate better with INTERREG the various instruments used for co-operation projects in third countries, namely ISPA, **MEDA**, **PHARE**, SAPARD, **TACIS** and **EDF**. It calls on the Commission to forward its report on the measures for improving co-ordination between INTERREG and the various above-mentioned Community instruments before 1 June 2000 at the latest. In addition, the Parliament invites the Commission to examine the creation of a single common fund.

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#### Socrates II: programme launched

A major conference to launch the next phases of the Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth programmes covering the period 2000-2006 was held in Lisbon on 17 and 18 March. The event, organised by the Portuguese Presidency, brought together ministers responsible for education,

vocational training and youth of the 15 EU Member States, the other countries in the European Economic Area (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) and the 13 countries candidates for accession (10 Central and Eastern European nations plus Malta, Cyprus and Turkey).

The new Socrates II programme will be promoted throughout Europe by a team of 50 young 'Socrates ambassadors', university students selected by three major students' organisations (ESIB, AEGEE and Erasmus Student Network) and trained by EU officials and academic experts. These promoters are available to take part in any event dealing with the Socrates II programme and also with the issues linked to 'recognition of studies abroad'. They also provide basic knowledge on other relevant EU programmes such as Leonardo da Vinci and Tempus. The list and addresses of promoters can be found at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates/annexmove.pdf>

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#### TEN-Telecom: Information Day

Commissioner Mr Erkki Liikanen, EU commissioner for Enterprise and Information Society, invited public and private players in the Information Society field to apply for Community funding to support the deployment of their plans to offer new telecommunication services and applications to European Citizens.

TEN-Telecom is an EU initiative which promotes the deployment of trans-European and global telecommunications applications and services for public interest. Although not part of the EU research programme, TEN-Telecom is a key tool for the exploitation of successful research activities from technical development to the market. This type of funding helps public and private players in the field of telecommunications to gather the evidence needed to support an investment decision, like feasibility studies, commercial and financial validation activities, business plans, and even revenue-generating pilot applications to prove the concept and evaluate user acceptance.

At this information day on 20 March, organisations received information on how to participate in the 'Call for Proposals' launched on 17 March. The indicative budget for TEN-Telecom is Euro 275 million for the period 2000-2006 and the indicative budget for this call for proposals is Euro 43 million. More information can be found at <http://www.ispo.cec.be/tentelecom>

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#### Education: Lisbon Summit on 'Employment, economic reform and social cohesion'

At the Lisbon Special Summit on 23 and 24 March, the European Council calls upon the member states, the Council and the Commission to take the necessary steps within their areas of competence to meet several targets, some of which are:

- schools and training centres, all linked to the Internet, should be developed into multi-purpose local learning centres accessible to all;
- learning partnerships should be established between schools, training centres, firms and research facilities for their mutual benefit;
- a European framework should define the new basic skills to be provided through lifelong

learning: IT skills, foreign languages, technological culture, entrepreneurship and social skills;

- a European diploma for basic IT skills should be established in order to promote digital literacy throughout the Union;
- define, by the end of 2000, the means for fostering the mobility of students, teachers and training and research staff through making the best use of existing Community programmes (Socrates, Leonardo, Youth);

This new approach should have three main components: the development of local learning centres, the promotion of new basic skills, in particular in the information technologies, and increased transparency of qualifications.

The European Council asked the Education Council to undertake a general reflection on the concrete future objectives of education systems, focusing on common concerns and priorities while respecting national diversity, with a view to contributing to the Luxembourg and Cardiff processes and presenting a broader report to the European Council in the Spring of 2001.

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Education: new education programmes launched

The Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates II and Youth programmes were launched on 17 and 18 March in Lisbon. At the Conference, the ministers of education noted their consensus in asking the Council to introduce an 'education' dimension in the Luxembourg process, develop benchmarking instruments regarding lifelong learning and move towards eLearning in order to 'train trainers' in the new technologies.

The new generation of European programmes lays particular emphasis on lifelong learning and the use of new technologies. The programmes also reflect the aim of strengthening social cohesion. With a combined budget of 3.52 billion euros for 7 years (30% up on the previous period) the Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth programmes will enable two million Europeans - mostly young people - to acquire new skills and learn other languages.

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Education: EP/Council of Europe on 'Media Education'

In December 1999, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe initiated a motion for a recommendation on media education. After having set the guidelines for future work in a preliminary draft report, the Committee on Culture and Education of the Parliamentary Assembly decided to engage in a broad political dialogue on this issue and invited the Committee on Culture of the European Parliament to organise jointly a hearing involving experts, media education professionals, NGOs and journalists. This hearing took place in Brussels on 23 March 2000.

The persisting problems in the traditional media and the new challenges posed by the information technologies require more specific action from which the 47 states participating in European cultural co-operation would benefit. This hearing served as a basis for the completion of the report that the Committee on Culture will present to the Parliamentary Assembly of the

Council of Europe. The recommendations that will be addressed to the Committee of Ministers to a great extent will foreshadow the intergovernmental work in the years to come. The European Union will be one of the main partners in this work.

Among these recommendations could be:

- to encourage the elaboration and development of media literacy programmes for children, adolescents and adults;
- to promote the elaboration and development of teacher training programmes in the field of media education;
- to examine existing practices in media education;
- to involve in an active dialogue on these issues educational bodies, parent organisations, media professionals, internet service providers, NGOs, etc.

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Netd@ys Europe 2000: new media in education and culture

Netd@ys Europe is an initiative of the European Commission to promote the use of new media in education and culture. Its main objective is to become familiar with the possibilities of using new media as a resource for learning and teaching by spreading and exchanging experiences on knowledge and discovery.

Netd@ys Europe was launched for the first time in 1997 within the framework of the European Commission Action Plan "Learning in the Information Society "(1996-1998). An effort has been made to achieve better co-ordination, in particular at the national level, between the thousands of projects and events which are organised locally and regionally. Originally focused mainly on schools, Netd@ys Europe has gradually been extended to include other types of organisations, such as vocational training centres, youth clubs, **museums**, cinemas, opera houses, **libraries** and companies. The informal and cultural aspects of education are now taken fully into account.

The 2000 initiative will be organised in a limited number of theme categories: citizenship, **European cultural diversity and identity**, equality of opportunities and **education and training** for improving digital literacy. More information can be found at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/netdays/index.html>

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Enlargement: FYROM Stability Pact adopted

On 17 February, the European Parliament adopted the resolution by Mr Swoboda approving the agreement with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM). The European Parliament recommends that the Stabilisation and Association Agreement should take the form of a joint agreement based on Article 310 of the EC Treaty. In addition, the European Parliament calls on the European Union to conduct, within the framework of the Stability Pact, an active regional development policy which would mainly finance actions towards regional co-operation and cross-border actions for adjustments regarding the improvement of management of border crossings and customs regimes.



Furthermore, the European Parliament advocates active EU regional aid under the Stability Pact to support regional infrastructure projects. It also advocates the continuation of the multi-beneficiary, cross-border programmes under **PHARE** beyond the year 2000 so that the process of regional co-operation can actually be implemented. With the adoption of an amendment by Italian Paolo Costa, the Parliament also proposes to involve the FYROM in a certain number of cultural and educational programmes such as **Leonardo**, **Socrates** and Youth for Europe.

The European Parliament renews its request concerning the view that implementation of the programmes should be decentralised and shifted from Brussels to Skopje.

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Enlargement: programme confirmed for negotiations

On 15 March, the Permanent Representatives of the member countries (COREPER) decided to follow the Commission's recommendation, proposing that the European Union begin membership negotiations with the six new applicant countries on several chapters of the 'EU acquis communautaire' between now and the end of the Portuguese Presidency (June 2000).

Among these chapters are:

- **Romania**: research, education and external relations;
- **Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania** and **Slovakia**: research, education, external relations, culture and audiovisual policies;
- **Malta**: research, education, external relations, telecommunications, culture and audiovisual policy.

The European Union agreed on the timetable of the negotiations at the March COREPER meeting, in order to formally inform the applicant countries at the first deputy-level negotiating meetings, which was held on 28 March. On the same day, applicant countries presented their negotiating positions for the relevant chapters. The negotiations cover 31 chapters in all.

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Information Society: eurVoice website

Citizens of the European Union are invited to contribute to a public discussion about their information rights in the new information society. A multi-functional website has been established at <http://www.eurvoice.org/>. This website is a project of the European Information Society Forum which aims at finding out what European citizens think about their rights in the Information Society.

A full summary of views expressed here will be passed on to the Commission and the European Information Society Forum. The information received will be considered in the drafting of a charter covering both consumers and citizens.

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### Information Society: eEurope Initiative progress report

The Commission's eEurope initiative was welcomed by the EU leaders last December, who then invited the Commission to prepare an action plan for their endorsement by June 2000 and to provide a progress report for the European Council in Lisbon. The Commission adopted the progress report on the eEurope Initiative on 9 March, in response to this request.

The report addresses progress since the eEurope initiative was launched. It provides details on current and planned initiatives which contribute towards achieving the targets in eEurope and sets out further actions required. It elaborates the ten actions of the Communication and makes recommendations endorsed by the Conclusions of the European Council.

The Commission has received input from various interest groups: industry, academics, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), national, regional and local governments and individuals.

On 31 March, the European Commission launched an interactive website on its eEurope Initiative ([http://europa.eu.int/comm/information\\_society/eeurope/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/information_society/eeurope/index_en.htm)). The purpose is to show how the initiative is being pursued following the Lisbon Summit on 23-24 March 2000. This is part of the Commission's commitment to tracking progress towards the targets of eEurope and to prompt a public debate on the initiative. The eEurope home page aims at becoming a new entry point into the Commission's policy and actions in the field of Information Society.

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### Information Society: eLearning Initiative

On 9 March, the Commission launched the eLearning Initiative to implement and supplement the eEurope initiative in education and training. One of the objectives of the eEurope initiative is to make digital literacy one of the basic skills of every young European.

eLearning is intended to implement the education/training part of eEurope. This initiative contains four elements: to equip schools with multimedia computers, to train European teachers in digital technologies, to develop European educational services and software and to speed up the networking of schools and teachers. Most of the resources to be mobilised will be national, but they should be backed by European Structural Fund assistance in the eligible regions, mobilisation of the Community programmes to promote digitalisation and development of partnerships between public authorities and industry.

eLearning sets the following objectives, within eEurope:

- for end-2001, all schools to have access to the Internet and multimedia resources;
- for end-2002, all teachers to be equipped and skilled in the use of the Internet and multimedia resources; and all pupils to have rapid access to the Internet and multimedia resources in their classrooms;
- for end-2003, all pupils to be digitally literate by the time they leave school.

Commissioner Viviane Reding will be presenting the details of the eLearning project to the Council meeting of Education Ministers on 8 June.

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An Information Society for All - Lisbon Summit on 'Employment, economic reform and social cohesion'

In preparing the transition to a competitive, dynamic and knowledge-based economy, the Council and the Commission are invited to draw up an eEurope Action Plan to be presented to the European Council in June this year, using an open method of co-ordination based on the benchmarking of national initiatives, combined with the Commission's recent eEurope initiative as well as its communication "Strategies for jobs in the Information Society".

Furthermore, the European Council calls in particular on:

- the Council along with the European Parliament to adopt as rapidly as possible during 2000 pending legislation on the legal framework for **electronic commerce**, on **copyright and related rights**;
- the Council and the European Parliament to conclude as early as possible in 2001 work on the legislative proposals announced by the Commission following its **1999 review of the telecommunications regulatory framework**;
- the Member States, together with the Commission, to work towards introducing greater competition in local access networks before the end of 2000 and **unbundling the local loop** in order to help bring about a substantial reduction in the costs of using the Internet;
- the Member States to ensure that all schools in the Union have **access to the Internet and multimedia resources by the end of 2001**;
- the Community and member states to make available **low cost interconnected networks** for internet access. Specific targets should be defined in the eEurope Action Plan.

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Information Society: strategy for jobs

On 7 February, at the initiative of Employment Commissioner Anna Diamantopoulou, the Commission launched an ambitious new strategy to promote employment and skills for the new knowledge economy, and to overcome the gap that has opened up with the US on access to the internet and use of information and communication technology.

Promoting job opportunities in the knowledge economy is a fundamental part of the EU's employment process and critical to Europe's future development. Europe has a large pool of untapped labour, which it needs to harness for the digital age. This is partly what the Commission's strategy is about. It is also about making full use of the skills of the 81 million Europeans currently in education - the net generation.

On Tuesday 18 April, Anna Diamantopoulou will be taking questions on jobs in the knowledge

economy in the wake of the strategy unveiled by the Commission in February. Questions for Anna Diamantopoulou can be sent in advance in any one of the eleven official languages of the EU to: [Chat-Diamantopoulou@cec.eu.int](mailto:Chat-Diamantopoulou@cec.eu.int). Those received in advance will be answered during the debate.

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ESC opinion: Lisbon Summit on 'Employment, economic reform and social cohesion'

On 16 and 17 March in Lisbon, the European Economic and Social Committee (ESC) discussed with the Portuguese Economic and Social Council the ESC's contribution to the Lisbon summit on 23 and 24 March, on the subject of Employment, Economic Reform and Social Cohesion - Towards a Europe of Innovation and Knowledge.

The ESC's message to the Heads of State and Government of the Member States of the European Union at the Lisbon summit, is as follows:

- adapt the European social model to the economy of innovation and knowledge;
- training all citizens in information society technologies, in the process of becoming basic life skills and opening up new opportunities;
- popularise and facilitate the growth of the enterprise culture;
- help established companies convert to the new paradigm;
- adapt education and training. A comprehensive action plan for literacy and numeracy, a more thorough preparation for the world of work by the education system and a new approach to S&T teaching and learning must be achieved. Women's acquisition of IST skills must be promoted;
- harness sustainable development for innovation and growth.

The results of the Lisbon Summit will signal to EU citizens whether governments understand the scale of what is needed, whether they have the will to deliver what is needed and whether they recognise the urgency that is needed to make the new paradigm a reality in Europe. A new paradigm might be needed for government itself since the public expects not only that rules and regulations are observed but also that services are provided properly and efficiently.

The ESC may take part in the High Level Forum to be held in Portugal in June, following on from the extraordinary European Council meeting of 23 and 24 March.

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Research: Establishing a European area of research and innovation

On 6 and 7 March a research meeting took place in Lisbon. The meeting focussed on three points: spreading out national research work in member states, mapping centres of excellence of European dimension and developing communications networks between the different centres of research. During the meeting, four of the topics mentioned in the Communication entitled 'Towards a European Research Area' were discussed. Some of the ideas considered are as follows:

- on centres of excellence, how best to map existing centres in the member states is considered to increase their visibility and link them to create virtual 'European centres of excellence';
- for research infrastructure, a mechanism for detailed assessment of the requirements of different disciplines is suggested as well as the need for a common European approach to new infrastructure;
- the document on research networks outlines the problems faced by the European community faces, including the lack of interconnection between national networks. The Commission has earmarked research networking as one of its highest priorities to support research infrastructures in the IST programme of the Fifth Framework programme;
- some suggestions are made on possible fields for benchmarking, such as the factors that influence investment in research and innovation, reinforcing the links between knowledge, innovation and industrial success.

The Presidency would prepare a document matched with an implementing timeframe for creation of a framework for the 'open co-ordination' of national research policies. This document will be submitted for approval to the Research Council on 15 June 2000.

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Research: Presidency conclusions on 'Employment, economic reform and social cohesion'

The Union must work towards the objectives set out in the Commission's communication 'Towards a European Research Area', adopted on 18 January. The European Council held a special meeting on 23-24 March 2000 in Lisbon to agree a new strategic goal for the Union in order to strengthen employment, economic reform and social cohesion as part of a knowledge-based economy.

At this meeting, the European Council asked the Council and the Commission, together with the Member States where appropriate, to take the necessary steps as part of the establishment of a European Research Area to:

- to map by 2001 research and development excellence in all Member States in order to foster the dissemination of excellence;
- encourage the development of an open method of co-ordination for benchmarking national research and development policies and identify, by June 2000, indicators for assessing performance in different fields, in particular with regard to the development of human resources; introduce by June 2001 a European innovation scoreboard;
- facilitate the creation by the end of 2001 of a very high-speed trans-European network for electronic scientific communications, linking research institutions and universities, as well as scientific libraries, scientific centres and, progressively, schools;
- take steps to remove obstacles to the mobility of researchers in Europe by 2002 and to attract and retain high-quality research talent in Europe;
- ensure that a Community patent is available by the end of 2001, including the utility model, so that Community-wide patent protection in the Union is as simple and inexpensive to obtain and as comprehensive in its scope as the protection granted by key competitors.

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