



March 2003

EBLIDA Hot News

The EBLIDA newsletter on EU library & information society issues

Highlights:

- 2002 annual report released, p.1
- DRMS workshop, p. 2
- Measures and procedures to ensure the enforcement of intellectual property rights, p. 5
- Parliament report on commercial re-use of public sector information, p. 9
-
- Conferences & workshops, p. 14
-

PO Box 43300
NL- 2504 The Hague
Tel.: +31 70 309 06 08
Fax: +31 70 309 07 08
www.eblida.org

EU Research and Development

2002 annual report released

The 2002 report on RTD activities of the European Union was published on 20 March. This annual report covers the period from January 2001 to March 2002, which was marked by unprecedented development of the Community's research policy. The Commission has given further thought

to all aspects of the European Research Area and has drawn up a framework programme which aims at contributing fully to make it a reality.

The report can be downloaded at http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/reports/2002/index_en.html.

FP6 on the Internet

The Europa Research site is at present launching a series of new pages to provide information on the sixth framework programme (FP6).

Europa Research,
europa.eu.int/comm./research/fp6/index_en.html

Marie Curie actions,
europa.eu.int/comm./research/fp6/marie-curie-actions/home_en.html

europa.eu.int/comm./research/fp6-era-net.html

ERA-Net Initiative,

europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6-era-net.html

International co-operation,

europa.eu.int/comm/research/iscp/index_en.html

Science and society,

europa.eu.int/comm/research/science-society/index_en.html.

Information Society

eEurope Awards

Four eEurope Award competitions, part of the eEurope initiative, will take place between 2003 and 2005.

Each competition will consist of a call for existing ICT applications used in public life and/or public service provision, to be

demonstrated at a high-level European conference.

Further information on the eEurope Awards and the current Call for applications may be found at <http://www.e-europeawards.org/>.

eEurope 2002 final report

On 27 March, Telecommunications ministers were briefed on the eEurope 2002 final report. According to the report, eEurope targets have been monitored regularly through the benchmarking exercise. Most of the eEurope 64 targets have been achieved due to contributions

made by many actors in the European institutions, member states, industry and social partners. Its achievements are important despite the difficulties of a sharp decline in the stock market, particularly in ICT stocks, high levels of debt, and subsequent reductions in investment.

Table of Contents

2002 annual report released	1
FP6 on the Internet	1
eEurope Awards	1
eEurope 2002 final report	1
Workshop on Digital Rights Management Systems, 25 March 2003	2
Public consultation on the Television without frontiers directive launched	3
LUMIERE database on admissions to films released	3
Cinema-going in the EU goes up by 10% in 2001	3
New Lugano Convention	4
Website on civil and commercial matters launched	4
Commission communication on a wider Europe adopted	4
Measures and procedures to ensure the enforcement of intellectual property rights	5
PLOTEUS Portal on learning opportunities launched	5
Erasmus programme goes worldwide	5
Informal Education Council held in Athens	6
Education, culture and youth contributions to the European Council	6
European Council conclusions, 20 and 21 March	6
Equal education opportunities in EU questioned	6
New pan-European co-operation guidelines for standardisation work	7
New "B2Europe" initiative for European companies	7
Parliament report on historical archives of the EEC and the ECSC adopted	7
Commission raises profile of researchers to stop the brain drain	8
€81 million to address major European challenges	8
FP6 Model Contract Working Group	8
Report on Science and Technology indicators 2003 released	9
Parliament report on commercial re-use of public sector information	9
MODINIS programme, good practices and network security	9
WSIS, World Summit on Information Society	10
IST Results Service, a new source of information for emerging technologies	10
Commission recommendation to promote broadband services adopted	10
Council agrees on pending issues on Community patent	10
Parliament calls for children to be protected from harmful websites	11
Action plan for skills and mobility	11
Parliament rejects new Commission proposals in favour of a European Employment Strategy	11
Council conclusions on electronic communications in Europe	12
Steps towards the implementation of the electronic communications package	12
Attacks against information systems and communication networks	12
Third generation mobile communications	12
Commission statement on GATS within the WTO	13
GATS within the WTO, including cultural diversity	13
Trade in services, GATS	13
Conferences and workshops	14

Lobbying for archives and libraries

Digital Rights Management Systems (DRMS) are technologies that describe and identify digital content protected by intellectual property rights, and enforce usage rules set by right-holders or prescribed by law for digital content. In the EU the legal framework establishing these rights is set out in Directive 2001/29/EC of 22nd May 2001 on the harmonisation of copyright and related rights in the

Information Society. Member States must transpose the rules set out in the Directive into national law by December 2002. Visit http://europa.eu.int/information_society/topics/multi/digital_rights/index_en.htm.

For further information contact Ms Corinna Schulze, European Commission, Office BREY 00/000, B-1049 Brussels
Email: corinna.schulze@cec.eu.int.

Workshop on Digital Rights Management Systems European Commission, 25 March 2003

The European Commission has maintained discussions with the different stakeholders involved in Digital Rights Management Systems after the adoption of the EU Copyright Directive in May 2001.

EBLIDA has been actively participating in the four working groups established from different points of view (Users, Technology Companies, Producers and Publishers, Collective Management Societies).

The Position paper issued by EBLIDA on February 2003 (www.eblida.org/topics/drms/drms.htm) already collected some of the ideas put forward during the Workshop organised by the European Commission the 25th March in Brussels, in order to follow discussions on the subject with all the parties involved.

Commissioner Erkki Liikanen opened the session stating, among other relevant facts, that attention must be given to consumers and users as well as to developing a common ground for consensus.

Both Directorate General Information Society and Internal Market from the European Commission were

represented at this meeting and special attention was given to issues without which DRM would not be successfully and widely used:

- Levies
- Standardisation
- Interoperability
- User-friendliness
- Development of broadband
- Security
- Management of development and application of DRM
- Role of public authorities

These and other questions were again placed on the table and will continue to be discussed.

A clarifying study on the economic impact of the copyright implementation in the different Member States is expected from DG Internal Market by the end of 2003.

The invitation of the EC to receive comments and proposals is opened and EBLIDA definitely has the opportunity and the commitment to make the libraries voice be heard on DRMS.

European Commission homepage on DRMS, http://europa.eu.int/information_society/topics/multi/digital_rights/index_en.htm.

Audiovisual

Public consultation on the Television without frontiers directive launched

The European Commission adopted a work programme last January to review the *Television without Frontiers* directive. The questions raised in the work programme are subject of a public consultation. All interested parties can participate by submitting written contributions by **15 July 2003**. The documents to be used as the basis for the debate are available at http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/regul/revuev-twtf2003/consult_fr.htm.

Moreover, the consultation includes public hearings scheduled for April and June, which will be based on consultation papers available on

http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/regul/revuev-twtf2003/consult_fr.htm. The written contributions will be available from http://europa.eu.int/yourvoice/index_en.htm or <http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/regul/revuev-twtf2003/contribution.htm>. After consultation, the Commission will publish a communication on the future of audiovisual policy, scheduled for the end of this year or beginning of 2004.

For participation in the hearings send a fax to +32 2 299 82 41 or email to eac-avpolicy-consult@cec.eu.int (*ref Auditions TVSF*).

Themes addressed

- access to events of major importance to society;
- promotion of cultural diversity and of competitiveness of the European programme industry;
- protection of general interests in TV advertising, sponsorship, teleshopping and self-promotion;
- protection of minors and public order - the right to reply;
- questions of application (competent authority, role of the national regulatory authorities, etc);
- access to extracts of events covered by exclusive rights (not currently covered by the Directive).

LUMIERE database on admissions to films released

lumiere.obs.coe.int/web/EN/search.php

The European Audiovisual Observatory has updated its *LUMIERE database* on admissions to films released in Europe. The database, available online and free-of-charge, is the result of collaboration between the European Audiovisual Observatory and various

specialised national sources as well as the Media programme.

LUMIERE provides country-by-country analysis of admissions for almost 10,900 films released in Europe since 1996. Data for 14 countries for 2002 is now available, including data for the major EU markets and the US.

Cinema-going in the EU goes up by 10% in 2001

In 2001, cinema-going increased by 10.2% in the EU, to reach 930 million admissions. Box office receipts rose by 12.9%, to exceed € 5 billion. In 2001, the number of spectators increased in all member states except Finland (-8%) and Belgium (-2%). The highest growth in the number of admissions was seen in Germany (+17%), France (+12%) and Denmark (+11%). Two in three films viewed in the EU are American.

data for Switzerland, Iceland, Norway, the US and Japan.

Eurostat, Statistics in focus, Industry, trade and services, no 8/2003, "Cinema statistics - The upward trend in cinema-going came to a halt in 2002" at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/>.

Further information will be found in "Cinema, TV and radio in the EU", a Eurostat detailed table series due out during summer this year.

These findings come from a report published on 21 March by Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities in Luxembourg. The publication also includes

For further information email Andreas Dollt, andreas.dollt@cec.eu.int.

Consumer Protection

New Lugano Convention

On 28 February, Justice ministers asked the Court of Justice for its opinion on whether the conclusion of the new Lugano Convention on jurisdiction and the recognition and enforcement of judgements in civil and commercial matters falls entirely within the sphere of exclusive competence of the Community or within the sphere of shared competence of the Community and the member states.

At present, apart from the fifteen, Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Poland are also contracting parties to the Lugano Convention. The Convention extended the

rules determining jurisdiction between member states that used to be laid down in the Brussels Convention (1968) beyond the boundaries of the EU. In March 2002 the Brussels Convention was replaced by Council Regulation (EC) No 44/2001 which modifies some of the jurisdictional provisions.

That is why the Lugano Convention will soon be changed to bring it fully in line with the rules that apply within the EU. For further information visit

http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/ejn/enforce_judgement/enforce_judgement_int_en.htm.

Website on civil and commercial matters launched

The European Commission has launched a website dedicated to the European Judicial Network in civil and commercial matters. The website will be regularly updated in conjunction with member states. It aims at outlining various national systems of civil and commercial law. The website contains information about member states, Community law, European law and various

aspects of civil and commercial law. This information will be available in the eleven official languages of the Union.

It does not however set out to answer questions in practical matters or to provide legal advice about a specific situation. Visit http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/ejn/index_en.htm.

Co-operation with third countries

Commission communication on a wider Europe adopted

The Commission adopted on 11 March, a communication setting out a new framework for future relations with Russia, the Western NIS and the Southern Mediterranean countries. The paper considers how to strengthen the framework for the Union's relations with neighbouring countries that do not currently have the perspective of EU membership (it excludes however Turkey, Romania and Bulgaria or the Western Balkans).

The communication proposes that "EU programmes and activities in research, education, culture and bilateral visitor programmes should be expanded.

Exchange programmes between youth and universities, the creation of European studies courses and the opening of new Euro information centres, 'people-to-

people' activities, including professional exchange/visit programmes, activities in the field of media, training and journalists exchanges merit close consideration". The full text of the communication (COM(2003) 104) can be downloaded from http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/we/doc/com03_104_en.pdf.

In addition, the report "Enlarging the EU: achievements and challenges" (26 March) sets out how the EU can confront its four major challenges: economic performance, internal cohesion, security and its external role by expanding its membership to 25 members.

The report is available for downloading at http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/communication/index.htm#kok_report.

Copyright and Intellectual Property Rights

Measures and procedures to ensure the enforcement of intellectual property rights

Despite the provisions of the TRIPS Agreement, there are still major disparities in member states as the enforcement of intellectual property rights. Competitiveness ministers heard on 3 March, a presentation by Commissioner Bolkestein of the proposal for a directive on measures and procedures to ensure the enforcement of intellectual property rights.

The proposal, submitted to the Council at the end of February, aims at harmonising member states' legislation concerning the enforcement of the various intellectual property rights across the EU. It also

endeavours at establishing a general framework for the exchange of information between the responsible national authorities. It adopts e.g. Rule 15 of the Berne Convention which establishes the presumption whereby the author of a literary or artistic work is regarded as such if his name appears in the work. Parliament will give its opinion (co decision) at plenary in September this year.

The full text of the proposed directive (COM/2003/46, 30 January 2003) can be found at <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex>.

Education

PLOTEUS Portal on learning opportunities launched

<http://www.ploteus.net>

The new EU PLOTEUS Internet portal is designed to connect people to detailed information on education and training in Europe.

PLOTEUS, which in ancient Greek means 'navigator', was launched by Commissioner

for Education and culture, Viviane Reding, on 5 March, Brussels.

The purpose of PLOTEUS, just like that of EURES (<http://europa.eu.int/eures/index.jsp>), its counterpart, is to put into effect the right to freedom of movement for European citizens by providing the necessary information.

Erasmus programme goes worldwide

Parliament's Culture committee adopted on 17 March, a report by MEP de Sarnez (A5-0087/2003) welcoming the proposal for a decision setting up the Erasmus World programme. Erasmus World aims at enhancing quality in higher education and promote intercultural understanding. It is intended not only for Europeans but also for worldwide candidates.

It will provide scholarships for graduate students from third countries other than EEA-EFTA states and EU candidate countries, and for third-country scholars with outstanding academic and/or professional experience during the 2004-2008 period. In addition to scholarships, the programme will be able to support partnerships between European universities and higher education

establishments in third countries.

The Commission also proposes the creation of EU masters degrees. The programme will also support the acquisition of language skills and intercultural dialogue.

The Commission is proposing a budget of € 200 million for the Erasmus Mundus, as the rapporteur wishes to call it to emphasise multilingualism and cultural diversity. The Culture committee however – with the Budgets committee agreement, wants to raise this amount up by 50% to a total of € 300 million, provided this does not take away funding from existing programmes and remains within the limits of the financial perspective. The report will be debated at plenary in April.

Informal Education Council held in Athens

Education ministers informally met on 1 and 2 March in Athens to call for member states to consider education policies separate from economic policies. The Commission insisted that education policies in the EU should remain under

the responsibility of member states and stated that the future European Constitution does not need to set out rules for national education systems. The fifteen also discussed benchmarking and the introduction of digital technologies in education

Education, culture and youth contributions to the European Council

On 18 March, External Relations ministers adopted the conclusions agreed by the Education Council on 6 February. The Council suggested that the European Council supports the current activities aimed at creating education and training in Europe, in particular through the implementation of the detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe, including the Copenhagen Declaration on vocational education and

training and through further encouragement of the Bologna process in higher education. The Council committed to prepare the interim report on the subject in time for the Spring 2004 European Council. The Education, Youth and Culture Council conclusions (6 February 2003) – Contribution to the European Council on 21 March 2003 were published in the Official Journal of the EU no 2003/C 77/02 of 29 March 2003, p. 6, which is available at <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/>.

European Council conclusions, 20 and 21 March

The European Council met in Brussels on 20 and 21 March for its third annual Spring meeting on the economic, social and environmental situation in the Union. With regard to education, the European Council called for:

- implementation of the ten-year programme on the objectives for education systems, inter alia by using benchmarks to identify best practice and to ensure efficient and effective investment in human resources;
- an emphasis on basic skills, languages, developing digital literacy and lifelong learning;
- the adoption of the eLearning and

Erasmus World by June 2003;

- Education ministers to promote the role of education and its cultural aspects in a European perspective fully respecting subsidiarity, and to report to the 2005 Spring European Council;
- Lifelong learning should be promoted, and closer cooperation in enhancing transparency about skills standards across Europe encouraged.

The Presidency conclusions, Brussels European Council (20-21 March 2003, Press release no 100/03) are available at <http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/newmain.asp?lang=1>, under European Council.

Equal education opportunities in EU questioned

Research results discussed on 14 March in Brussels highlighted the impact of social, political and economic global changes on education and training in the EU. The results show that education and training are linked to e.g. citizenship, cultural diversity and quality of life. Education policies are also strongly connected to other social policies e.g. health, welfare, youth, employment or immigration.

For instance, higher education across Europe is increasingly under pressure from

political and public demands to deliver greater opportunities to more students but with less state funding. For further information visit:

http://www.cordis.lu/improving/socio-economic/res_clusters_edu.htm;
Education and training policy and decision makers, www.pjb.co.uk/npl/index.htm;
Ongoing education and training projects, www.pjb.co.uk/npl/ongoing.htm;
Citizens and governance in a knowledge-based society, www.cordis.lu/citizens/.

Enterprise

New pan-European co-operation guidelines for standardisation work

Standardisation is a voluntary process based on consensus amongst different economic actors (industry, SMEs, consumers, workers, public authorities, etc) . It is carried out by independent standards bodies, acting at national, European and international level.

The European Commission, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the European standards organisations signed on 28 March, new co-operation guidelines to provide, inter alia, for

more extensive involvement of NGOs in the joint work of the European Committee for standardisation (CEN, <http://www.cenorm.be/>), the European Committee for Electro-technical Standardisation (CENELEC, <http://www.cenelec.org/>) and the European Telecommunications Standard Institute (ETSI, <http://www.etsi.org/>). Visit http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/standards_policy/index.htm.

New "B2Europe" initiative for European companies

The European Commission adopted on 5 March, a communication to improve access to EU business support networks. The *B2Europe* initiative connects the resources and intelligence of major European business support networks through a variety of tools which will be in place by the end of this year. These include a website, a "signposting" and a "Multiple Entry Point" system, which offers immediate and basic access to services for companies.

Overall, the initiative will help the networks deliver advice and assistance more speedily and efficiently. These networks are a vital source of support for SMEs.

The initiative is open to Euro Info Centres (EIC), Innovation Relay Centres (IRC), Business and Innovation Centres (BIC), COOPECO and EUROCENTRES networks in Latin America and to other networks. It aims at developing closer links with networks such as the National Contact Points for the RTD framework programme (NCP) and EURES for Europe-wide recruitment of labour.

The full text of the communication is available at <http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/networks/index.htm>.

EU Information Policy

Parliament report on historical archives of the EEC and the ECSC adopted

The European Parliament adopted on 11 March, a legislative resolution drafted by MEP Oreja Arburua (A5-0035/2003) on the opening up to the public of the historical archives of the EEC and the ECSC, with some amendments. The proposed resolution is now awaiting the Council final decision.

Parliament also stated in the recitals that the exceptions to public right of access provided for in Regulation 1049/2001/EC are exhaustive and apply independently of the place in which documents are kept. Documents selected for keeping in special archives do not constitute a special category of documents in this respect. Parliament went on to call for initiation of the

conciliation procedure under the joint declaration of March 1975 if the Council intends to depart from the Parliament's text. It also called on the European Convention to examine the possibility of including all agencies and bodies of the EU within the scope of Article 225 of the Treaty to facilitate the application of a constant regime on access to documents and on the historical archives.

The Commission proposal (COM(2002)0462, 19 August 2002), published in OJ no 2002/C E 331 of 31 December 2002, p. 169 can be consulted at <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/>. The report (A5-0035/2003) can be found at http://www.europarl.eu.int/plenary/default_en.htm, under latest reports.

EU Research and Development

Commission raises profile of researchers to stop the brain drain

Measures to raise Europe's investment in research to 3% of gross domestic product (GDP) were presented at a conference held on 24 March. The conference was dedicated to the future of human resources in research. The profession of researcher is not properly appreciated by the general public, therefore the Commission has decided to earmark € 1.58 billion (nearly 10% of the overall budget under FP6) for the training, mobility and career development of researchers.

In June this year, the Commission will submit a communication on the career of researchers, followed in the autumn by the

launch of a European mobility portal and a network of assistance centres for mobility. These two initiatives, which are part of the mobility strategy for the ERA (COM(2001)331, 20 June 2001), are intended to provide exhaustive information and local assistance for researchers involved in mobility.

This was subject of the Commission action plan on Science and Society, which aims at promoting better communication of the results of research among the wider public. For further information visit http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/mariecurie-actions/home_en.html.

€ 81 million to address major European challenges

89 new research projects raising some of the issues affecting Europeans were presented on 13 March in Brussels. The projects, backed by € 81 million, represent "the biggest ever socio-economic research networks in the world". The findings, which reveal current social trends and changes across Europe, will help in the development of measures to improve people's quality of life across and beyond the EU. The projects - grouped around five key issues and policy fields, will address wide-ranging socio-economic themes

across Europe.

In addition, the European Social Survey, a joint collaborative research effort between 23 national funding bodies, the European Science Foundation and the European Commission will provide a fully documented and easily accessible set of data to scholars, policy analysts, journalists, politicians and the public at large. The first release of data is foreseen this summer. Visit <http://www.cordis.lu/improving/socio-economic/home.htm> or <http://www.cordis.lu/citizens/>.

FP6 Model Contract Working Group

The Model Contract Working Group was set up by the DGs for Research to work on the drafting of model contracts for the new instruments under the Sixth Framework Programme (FP6). The working documents of the group are available at [http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/working-groups/model-](http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/working-groups/model-contract/index_en.html)

[contract/index_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/fp6/working-groups/model-contract/index_en.html).

These documents are only draft, initial discussion documents and do not reflect the final position of the Commission. The final documents are dependant upon the outcome of the discussions and decisions relating to the framework programmes, the specific programmes, and the rules on participation for FP6.

EU Research and Development

Report on Science and Technology indicators 2003 released

The third European report on Science and Technology (S&T) indicators 2003 was published on 17 March. The report found that the EU produces the highest number of science graduates and postgraduates, and is also the world's largest producer of scientific publications. However, the EU is still investing much less than its main competitors in research. Visit <http://www.cordis.lu/rtd2002/indicators/>

Furthermore, Agriculture ministers

adopted on 17 March, their common position on a decision concerning the production and development of Community statistics on Science and Technology, which aims at maintaining and improving the Community statistical information system on S&T to support and monitor Community policies.

The common position incorporates all Parliament amendments except one on cooperation and consultation with the Helsinki Group.

Information Society

Parliament report on commercial re-use of public sector information

On 27 March, Telecommunication ministers agreed on the text on the proposal for a Directive on the re-use and commercial exploitation of public sector documents. After final verification, this text will be adopted as the Council's common position at one of its forthcoming sessions.

The proposed Directive contains a minimum set of common rules intended to ensure that, in relation to the re-use of public sector information, the same basic conditions apply to all players in the European information market, that more transparency is achieved on the conditions of re-use and that unjustified market distortions are removed. The degree of

harmonisation proposed is relatively modest, leaving intact national rules governing access to public information as well as the level of data protection in place in Member States.

The modified proposal (COM(2003)0119) was presented by the Commission on 17 March. In principle, it incorporates 18 out of 23 of Parliament's amendments at first reading (12 February). In addition, the opinion of Committee of the Regions (CoR) adopted on 20 November 2002 was published in the OJ now 2003/C 73/ of 26 March, p. 38 available at <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/>.

*Co decision procedure
Second reading*

MODINIS programme, good practices and network security

On 27 March, the Council reached political agreement on the text proposing the adoption of a multi-annual programme (2003-2005) for the monitoring of eEurope, dissemination of good practices and the improvement of network and information security. After final verification, the text will be adopted as the Council's common position on this directive at one of the

forthcoming Council sessions.

The Modinis programme, adopted by the Commission on 26 July 2002, provides for financial support to accompany the member states' actions transforming the EU into a knowledge-based economy. Modinis would follow on from the Promise programme, which expired at the end of last year.

*Co decision procedure
Second reading*

WSIS, World Summit on Information Society

The WSIS is a formal UN Summit at level of Heads of State or Governments, which will be held in two sessions, namely in Geneva end 2003 and in Tunis in 2005. The EU has its own seat in the intergovernmental process of the summit, alongside the fifteen.

The Greek Presidency will hold a more detailed debate at their next Council meeting in June on the basis of a Communication, which the Commission is to present in May.

IST Results services, a new source of information for emerging technologies

The European Commission launched on 27 March the *IST Results* service to provide on-going information on results of the € 3.6 billion IST programme. This free service is intended to raise the visibility of new technologies and prototypes of products and services. A virtual press desk offers the latest developments, latest news, in-depth

feature articles. A bi-weekly e-bulletin is also available. Visit

<http://www.cordis.lu/ist/results>.

DG Information Society,

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/index_en.htm;

IST activities, <http://www.cordis.lu/ist>.

Commission recommendation to promote broadband services adopted

The European Commission adopted on 20 March, a recommendation that calls upon member states to facilitate the use of Radio Local Area Networks (R-LAN) for accessing public services. The recommendation encourages member states to allow deployment of public R-LAN access networks without sector specific conditions

and subject only to general authorisations. The draft recommendation represents the first of two phases of action regarding R-LAN. The second phase will seek to identify radio spectrum issues and harmonise the necessary frequency usage parameters and requirements.

Internal Market

Council agrees on pending issues on Community patent

The Competitiveness Council reached on 3 March a political agreement on the main elements of the Community patent. The text agreed, which covers the main outlines of the system of jurisdiction whereby a centralised Community Court would rule on disputes, the language regimes, costs – it reduces translation cost for patents in Europe by more than 50%, the role of national patent offices and the distribution of fees, is available at <http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/03/st07/st07159en03.pdf>.

Council meeting, Brussels, 6 March 2003 (6678/03, *Press 55*) at <http://eu.eu.int/newsroom/newmain.asp?lang=1>.

In addition, the Employment Council adopted on 6 March, a corrigendum to the Council statement regarding the political agreement. See 2490th Competitiveness Council meeting, Brussels, 3 March 2003 (6874/03, *Press 59*) and 2492nd Employment

The Council is now due to agree and adopt the text of the proposed Regulation. Five years after the grant of the first Community patent, the Commission will present a report to the Council on the functioning of all its aspects and, where necessary, make appropriate proposals. The assessment will cover: quality, coherence and time required for decisions and costs. The Commission may propose recommendations for further changes of the jurisdictional system. Further reviews should be made periodically. Further information can be found at http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/en/indprop/patent/index.htm.

Internet

Parliament calls for children to be protected from harmful websites

On 11 March, Parliament adopted a resolution by MEP Newton Dunn (A5-0029/2003) on new measures to combat illegal and harmful content on the Internet (amendment of Decision 276/1999/EC). MEPs adopted compromise amendments agreed with the Council working group so as to speed up the new plan. Parliament called for special emphasis to be placed on protecting children and minors and for closer cooperation with the accession countries.

Parliament also agreed with the Commission that the second phase should promote take-up

of self-rating by content providers and inform users about European filtering software and services. Further support should be given to encourage quality-site labels. The EU should financially support specific projects which can lead to European standards for industry self-regulation and for filter and rating techniques.

The Commission proposal (COM(2002)0152, 22 March 2002), which seeks to extend the current action plan until end December 2004., was published in OJ no 2002/C E 203 of 27 August 2002, p. 6. It can be consulted at <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/>.

Social Policy

Action plan for skills and mobility

On 6 March, Employment ministers heard the Commission's presentation on specific initiatives aimed at achieving the objectives of the skills and mobility action plan:

Free movement of workers

This Commission Communication (December 2002) describes the way to deal with the main issues still restricting the free movement of migrant workers and their families in the Union.

European Employment Services Network (EURES)

The Commission informed the Council of its Decision (December 2002) implementing Regulation 1612/68/EEC on

the clearance of vacancies and applications for employment aimed at renewing and updating EURES. The Decision is complemented with *EURES Charter*, which outlines the main operational aspects of the network. Furthermore, the Commission presented its Communication on the renewal of EURES legal basis, *"Towards an integrated European labour market: the contribution of EURES"* (September 2002).

European Health Insurance Card

See 2492nd Employment Council meeting, Brussels, 6 March 2003 (6678/03, Press 55) at ue.eu.int/newsroom/newmain.asp?lang=1.

Parliament rejects new Commission proposals in favour of a European Employment Strategy

Unexpectedly, the European Parliament rejected on 12 March, by 224 votes for, 231 against and 72 abstentions, the own-initiative report from MEP Mann (A5-0062/2003) on new proposals in favour of a European Employment Strategy and a social policy within the EU.

This report formulated proposals for changes of the European Employment. It asked the Commission to concentrate the guidelines on key points and invited the Commission and member states to introduce uniform evaluation methods. The

result of the vote on the amendments did not satisfy expectations of the PES Group, in particular with regard to SME and the reduction of the tax charter. This is why, PES members abstained at the time of the final vote. Some members of the EPP also voted against for other reasons, in particular the contents of the report as regards social dialogue, which explains why the final text was finally rejected.

The report can be downloaded from http://www.europarl.eu.int/plenary/default_en.htm, under latest reports.

Telecommunications

Council Conclusions on electronic communications in Europe

The Employment Council adopted on 6 March, its contribution to the Spring European Council on the situation of the electronic communications in Europe.

The Council conclusions on “Electronic

Communications: the road to the knowledge economy” are available at <http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/newmain.asp?lang=1>, under 2492nd Employment Council meeting, Brussels, 6 March 2003 (6678/03, Press 55).

Steps towards the implementation of the electronic communications package

<http://erg.eu.int/>

The European Regulators Group (ERG), consisting of the member states' National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs) in the telecom field, held its third meeting on 28 March in Brussels. The Group is established by the new electronic communications package that is due to be implemented by member states by end of July this year.

In accordance with the ERG work

programme, the NRAs have produced a common interpretation of significant market power, based on the Commission's guidelines on market definition and market analysis and the case-law of the Court of Justice.

The interpretation provides for further guidance on the assessment of significant market power under the new framework. It is expected to be available online within two weeks.

Attacks against information systems and communication networks

On 28 February, the ECOFIN Council, pending to some parliamentary scrutiny reservations and without prejudice of the examination of Parliament's opinion, reached a common approach on the framework decision on attacks against information systems, which aims at improving cooperation between judicial and other competent authorities through approximating rules on criminal law in the member states in the area of attacks against information systems.

Significant gaps and differences in member states' laws in this area act as a barrier to

effective police and judicial co-operation. This framework decision requires member states to establish the criminal offence of illegal access to information systems. It also provides penalties for attacks against information systems which are effective, proportionate and dissuasive, including custodial sentences in serious cases.

Adoption of the act is scheduled for 8 May 2003. See 2493rd Council meeting, Brussels, 7 March 2003 (6877/03, Press 61) at <http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/newmain.asp?lang=1>.

Third generation mobile communications

The European Parliament adopted on 12 February, a resolution based on its own-initiative report drafted by MEP Auroi (A5-0016/2003) on the roll-out of third generation mobile communications.

Parliament called on the operators involved in the roll-out of 3G to commit themselves to a transparent policy of offering services to guarantee consumers the maximum

amount of information. Furthermore, Parliament stressed that any trading of spectrum must not be allowed to lead to distortion of competition in the European telecommunications market. Member states are to help support broadband initiatives by means of tax concessions and measures to stimulate demand for broadband applications such as eHealth.

Trade Policy

GATS negotiations are about opening up trade in services to foreign providers. Each WTO member can decide the conditions under which a service is provided by a foreign provider. These conditions may be different from those imposed on the national provider. GATS does not require reciprocity in the engagement from other WTO members.

GATS does not cover services which are not supplied on a commercial basis or in

competition with other providers. It is only when a WTO member decides to subject a public service to the laws of the market that this service is subject to the rules of the market. The deadline of 31 March has not been met, therefore the European offer could be delayed for a few more weeks.

Further information on trade services can be found at http://europa.eu.int/comm/trade/services/index_en.htm.

Commission statement on GATS within the WTO

The Commission made on 10 March, a statement on the latest development in the field of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). The Commission's proposals under negotiations for trade in services come in the form of a "draft offer" which responds to requests made by other WTO members in the negotiating process. Parliament complained in particular at the

lack of transparency of the talks. Tenders are still confidential but will be published once the proposal has been finalised. There are no tenders for health, audiovisual and cultural services.

As for education, the only commitments made during the Uruguay Round related only to privately-funded education.

GATS within the WTO, including cultural diversity

MEPs called for further transparency, including full access to EU negotiating documents for all Parliament members. MEPs did also insist that developing and least developed countries should not be put under pressure to liberalise public services. In addition, Parliament welcomed the Commission's announcement that no offers of liberalisation are proposed in the health, education and audiovisual sectors. Parliament supports the further opening up of markets in the financial services and telecom sector, and in other areas e.g. computer services, professional services, business services.

MEPs stress the importance of cultural diversity and the need to respect national and regional diversity and to bring the common cultural heritage to the fore, underlining that each member state should have the legal flexibility to take all necessary measures in the areas of cultural and audiovisual policy to preserve and promote cultural diversity.

Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy expressed his support to Parliament in its wish to have a greater role in the definition of European trade policy.

Trade in services GATS

On 18 March, External relations ministers took note of an intervention by Commissioner Pascal Lamy on the ongoing WTO negotiations in the field of services. The Council invited its Article 133 Committee to make all efforts in order to agree the best possible EU initial offer on

services by the deadline of 31 March set by the WTO under the Doha Development Agenda. Visit <http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/newmain.asp?lang=1>, under 2495th External relations Council meeting, Brussels, 18 March 2003 (6941/03 (Press 63).

EBLIDA, European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations

We're on the Web!
Visit www.eblida.org

For further information
contact:
Carmen Morlon
EU Information Officer,
morlon@nblcl.nl

PO Box 43300
NL-2504 The Hague
The Netherlands
Tel.:
+31(0) 70 309 06 08
Fax:
+31(0) 70 309 07 08

Information sources used include

Bulletin Quotidien Europe
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.

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.