



March 2006

EBLIDA Hot News

The EBLIDA newsletter on EU library & information society issues

Highlights:

- § The European Digital Library, Europe's memory on the Web, p.1
- § Note from EBLIDA Interim Director, p. 2
- § Commission study on Europe's scientific publication system now available, p. 11

EU Information Policy

Internet Forum on the Future of Europe

The Commission launched on 27 March an Internet discussion forum on the Future of Europe. This discussion, which all EU citizens are invited to join in 20 languages, is part of the Commission's "Plan D" for Dialogue, Debate and Democracy in response to a call by the European Council for a period of reflection following the negative votes in France and the Netherlands on the proposed Constitutional Treaty.

The feedback of this discussion will be fed into the Commission's report from the period of reflection. It is available at <http://europa.eu.int/debateeurope/>.

In addition, the *Initiative & Referendum Institute Europe* (<http://www.iri-europe.org/>), which last autumn launched a comprehensive consultation process on the first Trans national tool of direct democracy, presented on 23 and 24 March the findings of this work at a Forum entitled "Beyond Referendums, Reflection Periods and White Papers: New Citizens' Initiatives for Europe".

The Forum was a contribution to the project "Initiative for Europe – a Citizens' Agenda" (sponsored by DG EAC, "Active European Citizenship").

Information Society

The European Digital Library, Europe's memory on the Web

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/digital_libraries/index_en.htm

The Commissions' plan to promote digital access to Europe's heritage is rapidly taking shape. At least six million books, documents and other cultural works will be made available to anyone with a Web connection through the European Digital Library over the next five years.

The following steps are envisaged: in 2006, full EU-wide collaboration between national libraries in the framework of The European Library (TEL) and the Conference of European National Libraries (CENL); multilingual access to digital collections of national libraries through the TEL portal (<http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/portal/index.htm>) in 2008. The collections must be searchable and usable. A minimum of 2 million digital works (books, pictures, sound files etc.) should be accessible.

TEL (see also *MEMO/06/102 of 2 March 2006, the European Digital Library: Frequently*

Asked Questions at <http://europa.eu.int/>) needs to have expanded to include collections of a number of archives, museums and other libraries, and possibly publishers by 2010 - a minimum of 6 million digital works should be accessible. In practice, this number can be much higher, if cultural institutions of different types and at different levels (national, regional, local) participate.

A network of competence centres, selected following an evaluation of the proposals by independent experts, could become the cornerstone of European digitisation and preservation.

In addition, Information Society and Media Commissioner Viviane Reding chaired on 27 March the first meeting of the High Level Expert Group on Digital Libraries, which is to advise the Commission on how to tackle

EBLIDA
PO Box 16359
NL- 2500 BJ The Hague
Tel.: +31 70 309 05 51
Fax: +31 70 309 05 58
<http://www.eblida.org>

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Lobbying for archives and libraries

Note from EBLIDA Interim Director

The first and best news for all EBLIDA activities is that a new director has been appointed. Andrew Cranfield will take up his post from 1 May 2006 to continue the EBLIDA lobby for the library and archive community in Europe. He looks forward to working with all EBLIDA members. He has an English/Danish background and worked as a public library manager in Denmark. EBLIDA members will have the opportunity to meet Andrew at the EBLIDA Council Meeting in Budapest, Hungary on 5-6 May.

EBLIDA has responded to the online consultation on the [i2010 Digital libraries in Europe](#). The European Commission decided to set up the High Level Expert Group on Digital Libraries, which convened at the end of March. At least three experts are coming from the national library area, and can be EBLIDA's natural liaison. The group's task is to advise the Commission on how to best address the organisational, legal and technical challenges at European level and to contribute to a shared strategic vision for European digital libraries. A special subgroup, presided by Prof Marco Ricolfi from Torino University, Italy will prepare recommendations on how to deal with copyright issues to facilitate easier access to a lot of electronic materials (digitized as well as born-digital).

The EBLIDA Copyright Expert Group met in Warsaw at the end of March on the occasion of a seminar and its Working Group, hosted by the *Warsaw University Library* and well-organised by Barbara Szczepanska. At the seminar, EBLIDA CEG-members presented several developments of copyright in Europe, its implementation and actions taken by library and archive organisations, most recently in France and Germany.

Upcoming issues were prepared for the Council meeting and EBLIDA response: the European Commission consultation on the [database directive](#) and the new [EU study on scientific publications](#). The group also had an informative meeting with Mr. Leonardo

Cervera Navas, in Brussels in February regarding the Digital Library Initiative. Furthermore, meetings with the Federation of European Publishers were on the agenda.

A conference on Digital libraries in the context of developing a digital strategy for Greece will be organized in May by the Technological Educational Institution (TEI) of Western Macedonia (a public Technical University), Greece. Harald von Hielmcrone, (EBLIDA CEG) will give a presentation on EBLIDA's position on digital libraries, and discuss the conference theme of Digital Libraries within a European Dimension.

Liaising with other organisations, EBLIDA stays in touch with issues dealt with by WIPO. International colleagues will participate in the WIPO Standard Committee on Copyright and Related Rights in Geneva, 1-5 May. SPARC and LIBER are two partners for preparing a response to the new EU study on scientific publications.

Council Meeting

We are preparing a varied programme with sessions on open access, professional development, lobby and digital libraries and the Council Meeting in Hungary: welcome on 5 and 6 May in Budapest. We are very happy with the keynote speaker: Dr. Norbert Kroó, who is a member of the High Level Expert Group on Digital Libraries, and also the Vice President of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. His theme: *Knowledge Economy and Knowledge Society*.

Furthermore, delegates and participants will be welcomed by our hosts: Dr. István Monok, Director of the National Library, Mr Janos Ambrus, General Director of the Hungarian Parliament Library, and Ms. Anna Nagy, the Director of the Metropolitan Library who will also give a presentation of library services for patrons with special needs.

We look forward to meeting you in Budapest!

Marian Koren

Audiovisual

Cross-border cooperation under the Television without Frontiers Directive *IP/06/374 and MEMO/05/98 of 24 March 2006*

Europe's broadcasting regulators from the EU-25 and Croatia, Turkey, Norway and Liechtenstein, chaired by Commissioner Viviane Reding, met in Brussels on 24 March to take note of the growing economic and societal importance of new on-demand audiovisual media services and of ensuring freedom of expression in such media. They also noted however that they could become the next vehicle of hate. Implementation issues under the TVwF Directive and technological challenges for the audiovisual sector e.g. digital and Mobile TV were also addressed.

The Commissioner called for new European approaches as regards new technical developments, as there is a risk that divergences among national licensing systems for mobile broadcasting could throw up unintended obstacles to the deployment of pan-European services and infrastructure. Licensing decisions remain a national prerogative, but regulators are keen to discuss the mobile broadcasting licence issue with the Commission. Besides licensing procedures, the lack of a common spectrum allocation could become an obstacle to cross-border mobile services.

Swiss film industry joins EU MEDIA programme

http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/media/index_en.html
<http://www.mediadesk.ch/>

From 1 April, Swiss film professionals are allowed to participate in the **EU MEDIA programme**. Swiss producers, distributors, sales agents, film training centres and festivals will apply to MEDIA funding under the same conditions as the other 29 participating countries.

The MEDIA programme aims at strengthening the competitiveness of the European audiovisual industry through support to development, distribution,

promotion and training. The current MEDIA programme runs until the end of this year and has a budget of € 513 million.

Switzerland will pay an annual contribution to the MEDIA programme. The European Commission had proposed to increase the budget substantially by granting € 1.055 billion to MEDIA between 2007 and 2013. The European Parliament and the Member States are currently negotiating a final budget for MEDIA.

Consumer Protection

The EDPS raises concerns on interoperability of databases

http://www.edps.eu.int/legislation/Comments/06-03-10_Comments_interoperability_EN.pdf

The European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS), Peter Hustinx issued on 10 March comments on policy options for the interoperability of databases in the area of Justice and Home Affairs. Although not properly defined in the recent Commission's communication, it is clear that interoperability raises a number of questions in relation to data protection which need a better analysis.

He underlines his need to be consulted on any legislative proposals that may stem from it and makes some specific observations e.g.

the Commission's analysis that there shall be a much higher threshold for access when internal security authorities query databases in other domains than when they query criminal databases.

Moreover, the EDPS says that interoperable systems increase the risks for citizens, if allowing for new access to their personal data. It is essential to examine this more carefully and not hide it as a technicality. He also strongly discourages the use of biometric data e.g. fingerprints - or perhaps even DNA - as a unique identification key.

Cooperation with Third Countries

EU - Latin America/ Caribbean summit

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/lac-vienna/>

On 13 March, Competitiveness ministers took note of a report by the presidency on the preparation of the fourth EU-Latin American and Caribbean summit as regards science and technology cooperation.

The summit, involving heads of state and government, civil society and the business community from both regions, will take place in Vienna on 11 and 12 May.

Intellectual Property Rights

Council resolution on Counterfeiting and Piracy

<http://www.europarl.eu.int/ocil/file.jsp?id=9149923>

On 13 March, Competitiveness ministers adopted a resolution in response to the Commission's communication on a customs response to latest trends in counterfeiting and piracy (*COM (2005)0479 of 11 October 2005*). The Resolution (*OJ 2006/C 67/01 of 18 March 2006, p. 1*) welcomes in particular, the concrete actions to improve customs controls, mainly those to strengthen international cooperation with main exporting countries and relevant international organisations; the need to build and promote a strong customs-business partnership to tackle the problem of counterfeit and pirated goods; and the approach taken to deal with the growing

problem of fake goods via a comprehensive EU Action Plan.

In its resolution, the Council invites the Commission to present appropriate proposals to support the implementation of the approach, paying special attention to enhancing the information exchange both between customs and between customs and operators involved in combating counterfeiting and piracy; and to report on its implementation and the actions set out therein as part of the annual report foreseen in Article 23 of Council Regulation EC/1383/2003 of 22 July 2003 (*OJ L 196 of 2 August 2003, p. 7*).

Culture

Five cultural heritage projects to be awarded European prizes

http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/portal/index_en.htm

The Commission and *Europa Nostra* announced on 13 March the five top prizes for the annual EU Prize for Cultural Heritage/*Europa Nostra* Awards, launched in 2002 within the Culture 2000 programme, to recognize best practices in heritage conservation on a European level.

The five top Prizes, with a monetary award of € 10,000 each, will be presented in the conservation of: Architectural Heritage; Cultural Landscapes; Works of Art; and outstanding studies and dedicated service to Heritage conservation. The Awards will be presented to the laureates at the annual European Heritage Awards Ceremony late June in Madrid, during a ceremony which

will be presided by the Queen of Spain. In addition to the five top Prizes, nine Medals and seventeen Diplomas were awarded (details at http://www.europanostra.org/awards_2006.html).

A total of 214 applications and nominations received in various categories were assessed by independent experts and evaluated by the Heritage Awards Juries in recent months. The awards presented aim at promoting high standards in conservation practice; stimulating trans-boundary exchanges of knowledge and skills; and at encouraging further exemplary initiatives in the field of cultural heritage.

Culture

Co decision Procedure First Reading

Citizens for Europe programme (2007-2013)

<http://www.europarl.eu.int/oeil/file.jsp?id=5243942>

The European Parliament adopted on 5 April a Resolution on the proposed Citizens for Europe programme for the period 2007-2013 to promote active European citizenship (*P6_TA-PROV (2006)0127 of 5 April 2006*), broadly approving the proposal to establish the "Citizens for Europe" programme.

In a first-reading report, adopted unopposed with two abstentions on 21 March, the CULT Committee and its Rapporteur MEP TAKKULA propose that the terms in the programme's title be reversed by calling it Europe for Citizens instead of Citizens for Europe.

The Commission had proposed three "actions": Active Citizens for Europe, Active Civil Society in Europe and Together for Europe. MEPs wish to add a fourth - Active European Remembrance - consisting of support for projects to commemorate the victims of Nazi and Stalinist mass deportation and mass extermination.

The programme will also cover town

twinning, including twinning of sports clubs; trans national and cross Sectoral citizens' projects; support for think-tanks and civil society bodies at European level e.g. the Jean Monnet Association, the Robert Schuman European Centre and, following an amendment by MEPs, the Maisons de l'Europe; and high-profile events organised by or with the European Commission.

The cost of the programme for the period 2007-2013 will be € 235 million, which according to MEPs should be regarded as a minimum. The maximum period for granting funding at any one time should be three years, to prevent the beneficiaries becoming dependent on it.

MEPs also stress that encouraging active citizenship is crucial in the fight against racism, xenophobia and intolerance, and in promoting integration, cohesion and democracy. In line with this, the programme should also be open to citizens of non-EU countries who have permanent residence rights in the EU.

European Capitals of Culture 2010

http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/eac/other_actions/cap_europ/cap_eu_fr.html

The selection panel appointed to assess applications for the European Capitals of Culture 2010 met on 14 and 15 March in Brussels. The report to be published by the Commission in the spring will then be forwarded to Parliament, Council and the Committee of the Regions. The Council (Ministers of Culture) is due to make a final decision under the Finnish Presidency during the second half of 2006.

In 2010, Germany and Hungary will each have a European Capital of Culture. In the case of Germany, two cities are in the running: Essen and Görlitz; Hungary has submitted only one application, from the city of Pecz. From outside the EU, Istanbul (<http://www.istanbul2010.org>) and Kiev have submitted applications under *Article 4*

of the Decision, which allows a city (only one) in a non-member country to be designated as a European Capital of Culture (as will be the case, for example, with the Norwegian city of Stavanger in 2008).

The members of the selection panel to examine the applications are Didier Fusillier, Lord Smith of Finsbury (Commission), Claude Frisoni, Sir Jeremy Isaacs (Council), Jordi Pascual i Ruiz (Parliament), and Seamus Murray (Committee of the Regions).

Following Patras this year, the next European Capitals of Culture will be Luxembourg and Sibiu (Romania) in 2007, Liverpool and Stavanger (Norway) in 2008, and Linz and Vilnius in 2009.

Culture

European Capital of Culture (2007-2019)

<http://www.europarl.eu.int/ocil/file.jsp?id=5251512>

On 5 April, Parliament adopted a legislative report by 584 votes in favour, 22 against and 19 abstentions on the system for choosing 'European Capitals of Culture' and monitoring their progress (*P6_TA-PROV (2006)0128 of 5 April 2006*). The report makes a number of changes to the Commission's proposed reforms of the system.

The major innovation is the introduction of a monitoring phase after a city has been designated as a 'Capital of Culture' to ensure respect of the criteria established for the cultural programme and also to give advice

and support to the city concerned.

The text also specifies details of the role of the selection panel and says that the prize, in the form of a financial allocation from the Commission, should be awarded at least seven months before the beginning of the event. It also makes appropriate changes to deal with the forthcoming accession of Romania and Bulgaria, adding them to the list for 2007 and 2019 respectively.

The amendments adopted have already been agreed with Council and Commission in informal negotiations so this report should signify the end of the procedure.

*Co decision Procedure
First Reading*

Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions

<http://www.europarl.eu.int/ocil/file.jsp?id=5301262>

COM (2005)0678 of 21 December 2005

The Commission presented in December 2005 a draft Council Decision aimed at concluding the UNESCO Convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expression. The Convention was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO on 20 October 2005. It demands ratification by at least 30 States before entering into force. Canada is the first country to have ratified it.

The purpose of the present proposal is to authorise the approval of the UNESCO Convention by the European Community.

The full participation of the European Community and its Member States in implementing the Convention will in particular contribute to:

- § establishing a new pillar of world governance to ensure protection and promotion of cultural diversity;
- § emphasising the specific and dual (cultural and economic) nature of cultural goods and services;
- § recognising the role and legitimacy of public policies in the protection and promotion of cultural diversity;
- § recognising the importance of, and promoting, international cooperation to

respond to cultural vulnerabilities, in particular with regard to developing countries;

- § Defining appropriate links with other international instruments that enable the Convention to be implemented effectively.

The Parliament CULT Committee appointed MEP Prets as Rapporteur in January; her report (*A6-0079/2006 of 23 March 2006*) was adopted by the CULT Committee on 23 March. Vote in plenary is scheduled for 27 April. The CULT Committee unanimously calls for the EU to ratify rapidly the UNESCO Convention on cultural diversity.

The Rapporteur draws particular attention to the important role civil society plays in protecting and promoting diversity of cultural expressions. She encourages the active participation of civil society in efforts to achieve the Convention objectives. Finally, the Rapporteur also calls on the Council and Commission to involve the European Parliament fully and inform it of any action to be taken in the future in connection with the UNESCO Convention.

The UNESCO Convention can be found at http://portal.unesco.org/culture/en/ev.php?URL_ID=11281&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

*Consultation Procedure
Own-initiative Report*

European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008)

<http://www.europarl.eu.int/oeil/file.jsp?id=5279532>

(COM (2005)0467 of 5 October 2005)

Co Decision Procedure First Reading

The Parliament CULT Committee discussed on 20 March its draft report by MEP Hennicot-Schoepges on the Commission's proposal for a Decision on the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue (2008), which, according to the Rapporteur, needs to be made simpler, with appropriate definitions and clarifications.

In general, a sustained process needs to be initiated in the context of intercultural dialogue. That process will reach its peak in 2008, but will begin immediately and continue beyond 2008. Steps must be taken to ensure that the action is sustainable.

Furthermore, it must also be coherent with other European Years, above all the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All in 2007.

More thorough consideration should also be given to defining the concept of intercultural dialogue itself (as it stands, the Commission proposal contains no definition of the term). It is important to think about the explicit reference to inter-religious and secular dialogue and also to consider what forms that dialogue could take.

Greater emphasis should be given to the role of culture itself. Consideration should be given to using existing programmes, in which case the contribution and possibilities of the Culture 2007-2013 programme should be stressed first of all in terms of targeting priorities.

The action should be prioritised through structured cooperation with the actors on the ground and also carried out in close cooperation with the European institutions and national and regional authorities, as well as with international organisations such as the Council of Europe and UNESCO.

It would be useful to include suggestions for specific and emblematic events and actions with a symbolic content at European level e.g. establishing a Prize for Intercultural Dialogue. In the context of the information campaigns, it would be useful to broaden the proposal to set up a website and instead create a genuine web portal.

The Culture Council is expected to debate the proposal in May; Parliament in turn will vote on the report at its plenary session of 31 May.

Education

Erasmus exchanges expand rapidly among the new Member States

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/erasmus/erasmus_en.html

The university exchange programme Erasmus continued to expand in the academic year 2004/2005.

The overall number of students taking part on Erasmus exchanges (144,037 Erasmus students benefited from a university exchange) rose by over 6% on the previous year, while the number of university teachers (20,877 university teaching staff) exchanged under the scheme grew by almost 13%.

The biggest impact of the scheme has been felt in the Central and Eastern European countries. Student exchanges rose on average

by an impressive 36% in the new Member States, while growth in teacher mobility was even more dramatic, rising on average by almost 77%.

Most of the 31 participating countries experienced a growth in incoming mobility, whereas the figures for outgoing mobility from the participating countries were more varied.

Spain remained the most popular destination for students, with France in second place, followed by Germany (primary destination for teaching staff) and the UK.

Education

Creation of a European Qualifications Framework

<http://www.europarl.eu.int/ocil/file.jsp?id=5303142>

(SEC (2005)0957 of 8 July 2005)

On 3 April, the Parliament CULT Committee adopted its draft opinion by MEP Gala on the creation of a European Qualifications Framework (EQF), calling for the Committee on Employment (responsible, enhanced cooperation) to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution.

The draftsman calls, among other things, for an inclusion of methods and systems for validation of non-formal and informal learning within the scope of lifelong learning and stresses the importance of a wide and well-structured communication and dissemination strategy to raise awareness and interest of learners and civil society as a whole and to show the concrete advantages that the EQF will bring for individual citizens, for the labour market, and for education and training systems.

He sees a necessity to agree principles in relation to quality assurance, in the scope of those the Member States will need to commit themselves fully and transparently and, believes that an ongoing updating and appropriate testing of the EQF based on facilitating a framework for co-operation and peer-learning is necessary.

The objective of the planned EQF is to create a meta-framework which will enable qualifications systems at the national and Sectoral levels to relate to each other. This reference structure will facilitate the transfer and recognition of qualifications held by individual citizens. It should contribute significantly to the transparency, transferability and recognition of qualifications at European level as well as stimulating national and Sectoral reforms in support of lifelong learning, thus of benefit to students and employees.

European Indicator of Language Competence

<http://www.europarl.eu.int/ocil/file.jsp?id=5288422>

(COM (2005)0356 of 1 August 2005)

On 23 March, the Parliament CULT Committee adopted its draft report by MEP Mavromatis (*A6-0074/2006 of 23 March 2006*) on measures to promote multilingualism and language learning in the EU.

The Rapporteur considers it necessary for both Council and Commission to propose further initiatives leading towards a genuinely multilingual European Community.

The Rapporteur stresses the need to use the Indicator properly for the formulation of conclusions at European and at national level regarding policy options. He agrees with the Commission proposal regarding the active participation of the Member States in the implementation and development of the Indicator in particular regarding relevant background information in respect of

linguistic proficiency (languages on TV, and in the family environment, number of hours of language teaching, experience of teachers, etc.).

Proficiency in at least two foreign languages should form part of the basic set of skills of a typical European citizen living, studying, working and generally circulating in the EU. Within a wider framework, initiatives by the Council of Europe e.g. European Day of Languages Day (26 September) and the EU e.g. European Language Label (innovatory programmes for the teaching and learning of foreign languages in the EU) are frequently of particular importance in ensuring that better advantage is taken of language learning opportunities.

The CULT Committee is expected to vote on the own-initiative report at its plenary on 26 April.

Education

Informal Education Council

http://www.eu2006.at/includes/Download_Dokumente/Final_Communique_EN.doc

An informal Education Council was held in Vienna, Austria on 16 and 17 March to discuss the future of European professional qualifications framework. Commissioner FIGEL presented the results of consultation started last summer with 32 countries, which ended on 22 December. The role of European universities in implementing the Lisbon agenda and the creation of a new pole of excellence in Europe (European Institute of Technology) were also discussed.

Other themes in focus were the ongoing integration of the Western Balkan countries into the European Area of Education, the significance of qualification frameworks (European and national) for education reforms in a lifelong learning perspective, and the role of the universities for the reform agenda in South Eastern Europe.

The Ministers acknowledged the important contribution of the **European Training Foundation** towards widening the European Area of Education to the Western Balkans, and the significance of regional cooperation within the Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE) and the Stability Pact for South Eastern Europe.

The Ministers further welcomed the suggestion of the European Commission to continue existing programmes in the area of higher education (TEMPUS and ERASMUS MUNDUS) after 2006. The Austrian EU Presidency will host a Conference of European Ministers of Education with a focus on the Western Balkans, and encouraged future presidencies to continue this dialogue at ministerial level.

Enlargement

2004 general report on pre-accession assistance – PHARE, ISPA, SAPARD

COM (2006)0137 and SEC (2006)0378 of 24 March 2006

The Commission presented on 24 March the fifth report on the three pre-accession instruments and their co-ordination: **PHARE, ISPA and SAPARD**. Detailed information on the activities in 2004 under each pre-accession instrument can be found in the relevant annual reports.

PHARE addresses priority measures concerning the adoption of the *aquis*

communautaire, whether through improving administrative capacity or supporting related investment. It also has an element for economic and social cohesion.

ISPA (*Instrument for Structural Policies for Pre-Accession*) finances major environmental and transport infrastructure projects.

SAPARD (*Special Accession Programme for Agriculture and Rural Development*) finances agricultural and rural development.

First negotiation chapter with Croatia and Turkey

COREPER has agreed to open accession negotiations with **Croatia** and **Turkey** on the first of the 35 chapters of the Community *aquis* **science and research**. Both countries are invited to present their positions; on that basis, the Commission will draw up a draft common position of the EU, which should then be approved by the EU-25 (unanimity).

Once adopted, the Presidency will invite both countries to initial negotiations, probably during the first half of the year. COREPER will soon deal with the second chapter: **education and culture**, on which the Commission has already reported to the Council. Analytical screening of chapter 23: **justice and fundamental rights** has been postponed until autumn.

Report on the strategy paper on progress in the enlargement process

(COM (2005)0561 of 9 November 2005)

Parliament adopted on 16 March a resolution, based on the own-initiative report drafted by MEP Brok (*P6_TA-PROV (2006)0096 of 16 March 2006*), on the Commission's 2005 enlargement strategy paper. The report is awaiting publication in the Official Journal.

Parliament called on the Member States and the Commission to draw up a communication strategy so as to meet the legitimate concerns of the European public regarding European enlargement and integration.

While **Turkey's** process of political transition is under way, the pace of change has slowed in 2005 and implementation of the reforms remained uneven. Parliament hoped that the opening of negotiations would act as leverage for further necessary

reforms. Parliament welcomed the decision to open accession negotiations with **Croatia** in October 2005 but pointed to ethnic bias against Serb defendants in the prosecution of war crimes and the fact that urgent action is needed to further improve the situation of the Roma.

Parliament welcomed the Council's decision to grant the **Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia** the status of candidate country. It called on FYROM to seek, together with Greece, a prompt, mutually acceptable solution to the unresolved problem of the country's name.

Parliament fully endorsed the presidency conclusions (*Thessaloniki European Council of June 2003*), when the Heads of State supported the European perspective of the **Western Balkan** countries, which will become an integral part of the EU once they have met the established criteria.

Council conclusions on relations with Western Balkans

On 20 March, the External Relations Council welcomed the progress made on the negotiations for a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with **Bosnia and Herzegovina** since November 2005.

As regards **Serbia and Montenegro**, the Council recalled its conclusions of 27 February 2006 that full cooperation with the ICTY must be achieved to ensure that the SAA negotiations are not disrupted.

EU Information Policy

Openness of meetings of the Council when acting in its legislative capacity

<http://www.europarl.eu.int/ocil/file.jsp?id=5296292>

Parliament adopted on 4 April a resolution on the Special Report from the European Ombudsman following the draft recommendation to the Council of the EU in complaint 2395/2003/GG concerning the openness of the meetings of the Council when acting in its legislative capacity (*P6_TA-PROV (2006)0121 of 4 April 2006*). The resolution is awaiting publication in the Official Journal.

The report was presented at the October 2005 meeting of the Committee on Petitions, which decided to draw up an own-initiative report; MEP Mintz was nominated Rapporteur. In his Special Report Mr

Diamandouros found that the Council had given no valid reasons for refusing to conduct its legislative meetings in public.

The Rapporteur endorses the Ombudsman's conclusions and further recommends the Council to amend its rules of procedure and working methods so meetings are open and accessible to the public.

The Council adopted at the end of December 2005 a decision to open to the public all its debates and votes on legislative proposals within the co decision procedure. An Internet site is due to become operational by the summer.

EU Research and Development

Commission study on Europe's scientific publication system now available

http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/science-society/pdf/scientific-publication-study_en.pdf

The European Commission published on 31 March a study which examines the scientific publication system in Europe. The report, drawn up for the Commission by a consortium led by Professor Dewatripont of the "Université Libre de Bruxelles", makes a number of recommendations for future action. It is available at All interested parties are invited to send feedback on the report's findings to the Commission as well as on other issues linked to scientific publications by 1 June 2006 to rtd-scientific-publication@cec.eu.int.

The recommendations include guaranteed public access to publicly-funded research, at the time of publication and also long-term; a "level-playing field" so that different business models in publishing can compete fairly in the market; ranking scientific journals by quality, defined more widely than pure scientific excellence, but also taking into

account factors such as **management of copyright, search facilities and archiving**; developing pricing strategies that promote competition in the journal market; scrutinising major mergers that may take place in this sector in the future; and promoting the development of electronic publication by e.g. eliminating unfavourable tax treatment of electronic publications and encouraging public funding and public-private partnerships to create **digital archives** in areas with little commercial investment.

The study and its public feedback will be at the centre of a conference on scientific publication to be held in autumn 2006. SINAPSE (<http://europa.eu.int/sinapse>), the web interface between the scientific community and Europe's policy-makers, will also host a debate on the subject.

Specific programmes and rules for participation under FP7

On 13 March, Competitiveness ministers held an exchange of views on five of the seven specific programmes proposed for implementing the FP7 and on the current state of play of the rules for participation of undertakings, research centres and universities in actions under FP7.

The debate took place for **Cooperation**: collaborative research; **Ideas**: establishment of a European Research Council (ERC); two programmes for direct actions to be carried out by the **Joint Research Centre**; and **EURATOM**: for nuclear research and training activities. It focused on the ethical principles; the broad principles governing the management and implementation of the specific programmes; and questions related to the implementing structure for the ERC. A large degree of consensus was reached after debate.

On 28 November 2005, the Council reached agreement on a partial general approach on FP7; the remaining specific programmes, **People**: human resources and **Capacities**: potential research capacities of SMEs will be

examined at a later stage.

Competitiveness ministers also reached unanimous agreement on the objectives, instruments and content of the proposed **Competitiveness and Innovation framework Programme (CIP) for 2007-2013**, pending Parliament's opinion and the final agreement on the financial perspectives.

The agreed text on the partial general approach builds upon results achieved under previous presidencies and includes *inter alia* the following main features: clear articulation of the complementarities between the CIP and FP7 and the EU's structural funds, respectively; clarification and higher visibility in respect of eco-innovation; and improvement of the monitoring and evaluation aspects of implementation of the CIP.

The future CIP programme brings together existing specific programmes into a unified framework under three pillars e.g. the Information and Communications Technology policy support programme.

Information Society

The European Digital Library, Europe's memory on the Web

...continues from Page 1

key challenges in making Europe's cultural heritage available online.

The group set up a framework for future discussions and had a first exchange of views on copyright issues. In a recent online consultation, right holders supported the adequacy of the present copyright rules and the need to fully respect and enforce them, while cultural institutions highlighted a number of problems in the present copyright framework that could potentially undermine efficient digitisation and digital preservation.

The Group has 20 members. They are experts from libraries, archives, museums, content providers, industry e.g. search

engines, technology providers, research organisations and academia. Members are appointed in a personal capacity and have a two-year renewable mandate. The list of members with CVs can be consulted at http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/digital_libraries/high_level_expert_group/index_en.htm.

Moreover, as a follow-up to the Commission communication on Digital Libraries (*COM/2005/0465 of 30 September 2005*), the CULT Committee at Parliament debated on 21 March the draft report by MEP Descamps (PPE-DE), appointed Rapporteur on 23 November 2005.

Commission report on Electronic Signatures

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/europe/i2010/a_single_infor_space/index_en.htm

COM (2006)0120 of 15 March 2006

This Report by the Commission reviews the operation of *Directive 1999/93/EC on a Community framework for electronic signatures (OJ L 13 of 19 January 2000, p.12)* in accordance with *Article 12* of the Directive. It is partly based on the results of an independent study carried out by external consultants (*Study on the legal and market aspects of electronic signatures, K.U.L., 2003*,

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/europe/2005/all_about/trust/electronic_sig_report.pdf,

and on the outcome of informal consultations with interested parties.

Although the study focuses on the use of advanced or qualified e-signatures and found a very slow take up, it shows that many other

e-signature applications e.g. ID cards, e-government services had become available that use the simpler form of e-signatures. The report also confirms that the Directive continues to provide, for now, a valid basis for e-signatures in the internal market.

In the months to come, the Commission will hold a series of meetings with EU Member State experts and stakeholders to consider possible complementary measures, to address the differences in the transposition of the Directive; the clarifications of specific articles; the technical and standardisation aspects - a report on standards for e-signatures is expected by end of 2006. Particular emphasis will be on cross-border use of e-signatures and interoperability.

Commission mobilises all its policy instruments to bridge the broadband gap

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/industry/comms/broadband/index_en.htm

The Commission presented on 21 March a Communication on "Bridging the Broadband Gap" [*COM (2006)0129, SEC (2006)0354 and SEC (2006)0355*], which implements one of the priorities of the i2010 initiative.

The analysis is based on the findings of the Digital Divide Forum Report

(http://europa.eu.int/information_society/europe/i2010/digital_divide/index_en.htm), open to consultation until 16 September 2005. It reviews progress on the availability of broadband access in the EU-15 plus Norway and Iceland in 2003-2004. Data for the new Member States are not yet available.

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Information Society

Commission mobilises all its policy instruments to bridge the broadband gap http://europa.eu.int/information_society/industry/comms/broadband/index_en.htm

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In its communication, the Commission proposes two main strands of action: strengthening national broadband strategies, which should set clear targets and reflect regional needs and stepping up the exchange of best practices e.g. by setting up a website that would act as a single meeting point for local authorities and industry players to exchange information and gather experience.

The Commission will continue monitoring the broadband digital divide by analysing all

the aspects of the "broadband divide" in the i2010 annual progress reports and in the context of the e-Inclusion initiative planned for 2008 and monitoring broadband developments in the new Member States and reporting on them in 2006. It will also hold a large "Broadband for all" conference at the start of 2007 to showcase the benefits of broadband services to the rural communities.

For further information see *MEMO/06/132* at <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/>.

Commission launches public consultation on radio frequency ID tags http://europa.eu.int/information_society/policy/rfid/index_en.htm

The European Commission launched on 9 March a public consultation with a high-level conference on Radio Frequency Identification Devices (RFID) at the CeBit 2006 trade fair in Hannover, Germany (<http://www.cebit.de/34733?usertyp=1&highlight=Reding&x=1>).

The public debate will rely on a series of workshops, taking place in Brussels between March and June, which will address RFID applications, end-user issues, interoperability

and standards, and frequency spectrum requirements. Additional feedback which could lead to amendments of the e-privacy Directive (up for review this year) will be analysed and integrated in a Commission communication on RFID, to be adopted in September.

See also *MEMO/06/112 of 9 March 2006, Radio Frequency Identification Devices (RFID): Frequently Asked Questions* at <http://europa.eu.int/rapid/>.

Internal Market

European contract law and the revision of the *acquis*

(COM (2004)0651 of 11 October 2004)

Parliament adopted on 23 March a Resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by MEP Lehne (*P6_TA-PROV (2006)0109 of 23 March 2006*) on European contract law and the revision of the *acquis*. It is awaiting publication in the Official Journal.

Parliament calls on the Commission to distinguish between legal provisions applicable to the B2B sector and those applicable to the B2C sector, and to separate the two systematically. Parliament highlighted the importance of taking into account the fundamental principle of

freedom to conclude a contract, particularly in the B2B sector, and also of the European social model when harmonising contract law.

Parliament also calls on the Commission to submit without delay a clear legislative plan setting out the future legal instruments by which it aimed to bring the results of the work of the research groups and the CFR-Net into use in legal transactions.

Parliament favoured the adoption of general regulations including legal concepts which are not precisely defined, thus giving the courts the necessary margin of discretion in arriving at their judgments.

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

PO Box 16359
NL-2500 BJ The Hague
The Netherlands
Tel.: +31(0) 70 309 05 51
Fax: +31(0) 70 309 05 58

Information sources used include

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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
RAPID - Press and Communication Service of the European Commission,
<http://europa.eu.int/rapid/start/welcome.htm>
EUR-Lex, <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/>. Since 1 November 2004, EUR-Lex incorporates the CELEX service and provides free access in 20 languages to EU law.
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.publications.eu.int/official/> (new dates for the Official Journal Supplement since January 2005). EBLIDA Hot News online 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 e.g. preparatory legislative documents and questions put by Members of Parliament to the Commission and Council.

The C series is available online via 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.

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.