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### ***Copyright Directive: mixed response to Common Position compromise***

On 8 June, the Permanent Representatives Committee (COREPER) reached an agreement on a copyright law to protect music, films and other works distributed online. This agreement was made possible by compromises over the circumstances in which digital copies can be made on tapes, CDs and in computer memory.

However, the draft agreement falls short of the expectations of some interested parties who claim that compromises to secure a deal will fragment the single market. One of these compromises is a formula to bridge the gap between member states which demanded that authors' and creators' rights must be protected from the threat of wholesale digital copying of their works, and those which insisted consumers must be allowed to make digital copies of content, such as music and television programmes, for 'time-shifting' purposes e.g. making a copy of a TV programme to watch it later. The proposed directive would allow governments to keep exemptions, such as those granted to libraries and the disabled, backed up by EU-wide requirements for member states to act if rightholders use technical measures to prevent them. The agreed document provides an obligatory exemption from the copyright law for service providers, telecommunications operators and others who make so-called technical copies in the process of putting works on the internet. Private copying would be allowed, providing that copyright holders receive fair compensation for those exemptions. The nature of this compensation (tax on the sale of blank tapes and recording equipment, etc.) is left to the discretion of member states.

EBLIDA is currently analysing the text for a response.

### ***Data Protection: adequacy of the US safe harbor privacy principles***

On 21 June, in spite of a strong recommendation by Legal Affairs Commissioner *Frits Bolkestein* to the contrary, the Citizens' freedoms and rights committee adopted a report by MEP *Ornella Paciotti* in which doubts were raised over the adequacy of personal data protection in the United States. The committee felt that the American system of self-regulation (safe harbor privacy principles) contained several loopholes and was not yet fully operational, mainly concerning the nature and scope of the principals proposed on 'confidentiality', which provokes a feeling of uncertainty as to the effective protection of data.

The report was critical of the Commission because data relating to EU citizens now seemed to be circulating in third countries without any effective control by the Commission or the EU Member States. The Commission was given until 30 September to draw up standard contractual clauses that EU citizens could invoke in the courts of third countries.

The committee agreed that, for economic reasons, it would be unwise to hold up the free movement of data to the US, all the more so since this transfer apparently already takes place without any guarantees whatsoever.

Commissioner Bolkestein stressed that further improvements in negotiations with the US were not possible, so he fears that a „yes, but“ from the European Parliament would risk the entire safe harbor system. The Paciotti report must now be reviewed by the European Parliament before it can be formally adopted and implemented. The remaining procedural steps are expected to be completed in July. The so-called safe harbor agreement will make US businesses responsible for safeguarding the privacy of any personal information they may collect about European consumers.

### ***Electronic Commerce: Commission proposal on new VAT system***

On 7 June, the Commission presented a draft directive on taxation of online services. It aims at modernising the legislation concerning VAT on services, which dates back to the 1960s, to take into account the emergence of new commercial practices on the internet network. The proposal mainly concerns the supply over electronic networks (i.e. digital delivery) of software and computer services generally, plus information and cultural, artistic, sporting, scientific, educational, entertainment or similar services.

All the services provided in the European Union would therefore be subject to European VAT while the same services provided to other destinations would not. This rule has already been enforced for material goods bought through electronic networks and delivered by postal services. The legislation currently in force does in fact provide for EU electronic services to be taxed, even if delivered within the European Union. The new directive should put an end to this anomaly. In the case of services to individuals, the service provider would bear the cost, at the rate in force in the state where it is registered.

The implementation of the directive is planned towards 2003. To be adopted, the draft should receive the unanimity of the member states after the opinion of the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee. The full text of the Commission's proposal is available at: <[http://europa.eu.int/comm/taxation\\_customs/proposals/taxation/com349\\_2000/com2000\\_349en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/taxation_customs/proposals/taxation/com349_2000/com2000_349en.pdf)>

***Safer use of the internet: 10 new projects are being financed***

Following the call for proposals launched in 1999, the European Commission is currently financing ten projects under its action plan for promoting safer use of the internet. The four-year plan has a budget of Euro 25 million to deal with the problem of illegal and harmful content on the global network. The ten projects cover the three action lines of the action plan:

- European network of hotlines to which the public can report illegal content on the internet;
- rating and filtering, used as control mechanisms by parents;
- actions to raise awareness of the potential of the internet and its drawbacks to boost the confidence of parents, children and teachers.

The Commission has announced that a further call for proposals will be launched at the end of 2000 on 'close to market' solutions for third-party rating.

The Commission has also presented two reports concerning the two main types of technology currently available to help parents ensure that their children can use the internet safely: content filtering based on self-labelling and on third-party rating. Both reports and the projects can be downloaded from: <http://www.ispo.cec.be/iap/>

***Media: reports on Media Plus programme adopted by Parliament***

On 22 June, the Culture committee unanimously adopted two reports by MEP *Ruth Hieronymi* on Commission proposals concerning the MEDIA Training programme for professionals in the European audiovisual industry (codecision, first reading) and the MEDIA Plus programme - development, distribution and promotion of European audiovisual works (consultation procedure).

The committee considered an amount of Euro 70m (instead of 50m) as the minimum required for the training programme for professionals. The committee also pointed out that the scarce financial resources of the training programme should be focused on in-service training rather than on initial training projects, and that it was necessary to define priorities when selecting supported activities.

With regard to the development and distribution of audiovisual works, reservations about two central issues were expressed: the funding and the legal basis of the programme. On the latter point, the committee felt that Parliament should be fully involved via codecision, rather than consultation procedure. Furthermore, the committee urged the IGC to incorporate the cultural and audiovisual industries expressly in Article 151 of the EC Treaty, so that such matters would automatically be subject to the codecision procedure.

The committee considered that Euro 480m (instead of 350m) was the minimum required. Indeed, further funding possibilities, such as co-operation with the European Investment Bank and the European Investment Fund and more intensive networking should be explored. Other points raised by the report included the need for co-ordinated market strategies to enable films to succeed in terms of European and international distribution as well as the need to focus on projects such as the digitisation of archives and catalogues. The committee also requested that the specific needs of the audiovisual sector in countries with lower audiovisual capacity and/or restricted geographic and linguistic areas were taken into account.

Last but not least, information for professionals about all funding possibilities should be comprehensive and easily accessible.

MEDIA Plus is an extension of the existing MEDIA II programme and will run from 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2005.

#### ***Access to documents: public register of Council documents***

A register containing references to Council documents as from 1 January 1999 is available from the Council website <<http://register.consilium.eu.int/utfregister/framews/introfsEN.htm>>. Following the Decision of the Council of 6 December 1999 on the improvement of information on the Council's legislative activities and the public register of Council documents, references to classified documents have also been included. The register indicates which documents have already been released to the public. In these cases, they can be obtained directly from the database or through the Public Information service of the Council. This applies to all such documents from 1 January 2000 onwards.

#### ***Education: Council ministers review challenges facing education***

On 8 June, EU Education ministers met to focus on:

- the future challenges and objectives of education systems in the learning society - a follow up to the Lisbon summit. Ministers welcomed the Lisbon Council's recognition of the role of education and training in seeking solutions for employment and social cohesion. A report incorporating new areas such as lifelong learning and new information technologies should be submitted to the extraordinary European Council in Stockholm in 2001;
- the *eLearning* initiative - education of tomorrow. Presented by Commissioner Reding and welcomed by ministers, it aims at implementing the eEuro-

pe initiative in the fields of education and training by helping schools and other educational establishments to enter the digital age;

- the European report on quality of school education (up to university level): 16 quality indicators. A committee of experts from 37 European and non-European countries identified 16 key indicators of performance, covering areas such as foreign languages, school failure rate, education and training of teachers. It was also submitted to the Conference of European Education Ministers on 19 June in Bucharest and is available for downloading from: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/indic/rapinen.pdf>;
- European co-operation in quality evaluation in school education. Pending the opinion of the European Parliament scheduled for early July, the Presidency submitted a progress update, in January 2000 and is now following the codecision procedure;
- Mobility of students, persons undergoing training, young volunteers, teachers and trainers. Pending the opinion of the European Parliament, expected next September, the Presidency submitted a progress report on 24 January 2000;
- Ministers adopted a decision establishing the *European Year of Languages 2001*. The Council approved all the amendments passed by the European Parliament at first reading. This will enable the Commission to launch preparatory measures in time for the European Year of Languages to get under way on 1 February 2001.

### ***Education: Education ministers conference on European education area***

The European conference of Education Ministers, held on 19 and 20 June in Bucharest, was devoted to the relationship between education policies, social cohesion and teaching quality. Commissioner *Reding* presented the European report to ministers on the quality of teaching in schools and confirmed that the new phase of the TEMPUS programme, which contributes to the reform of higher education systems in European non-EU countries for the period 2000-2006, will be open not only to the TACIS countries but also to South East European countries, mainly Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Croatia. The Commission will present a memorandum on education and lifelong learning in November 2000.

### ***Internet: website on community actions linked to tourism***

The Commission has set up an internet roadmap website containing information on various EU programmes, funds, schemes, initiatives and community

actions relating to tourism. The initiative was taken in the context of its communication of 28 April 1999 on improving the employment potential of tourism, and of the conclusions of the Internal Market Council on 21 June 1999 calling for the diffusion of information through new technologies to be facilitated.

The site presents European projects according to specific fields of interest, such as training, regional co-operation, research and technological development and cultural actions to support tourism. Its homepage is: <[http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/services/tourism/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/services/tourism/index_en.htm)>

### **Research: ministers debate on the future European research area**

The Research Council met on 15 June to discuss issues such as the information and knowledge society, the future European research area and European competitiveness. The discussion focused on:

- an open debate on information and knowledge society. Main issues were: targets in the *eEurope* initiative, particularly on the role of information and communication technologies for the realisation of the European research area; ways in which *eEurope* and the *European research area (ERA)* initiatives could best be exploited to ensure effective networking of European researchers; and a high-speed Trans-European network linking research institutes, universities, libraries, etc for European research, to be in place by the Commission by end of 2001;
- plans for the sixth framework programme were presented by Commissioner Busquin. He believes that this framework programme „is only an instrument at the service of research. Alone it remains insufficient“. He intends to present a *first guideline on the sixth framework programme next October*, insisting on the need for coherence by the new framework programme with the objectives of the European Research area. The Swedish Presidency will further concentrate on the preparation of the programme;
- the latest developments in terms of co-operation with third countries, notably United States and China, were discussed. The Council encouraged the Commission to continue its joint research activities with third Mediterranean countries and to support, in the framework of the *MEDA* programme, the dissemination, exploitation and transfer of scientific and technological knowledge;
- For the implementation of the benchmarking or research policies, the Commission proposes to create a group of high level representatives from the member states to monitor the work and guarantee the quality of the

process. Commissioner Busquin suggested a list of 15 indicators concerning human resources, research efforts and impact of policies.

### ***STOA Workplan 2000: projects adopted for this year***

STOA carries out research for the Committees of the European Parliament assessing policy options in science and technology and related areas. Of the 18 projects adopted for 2000, project steering group meetings have been already held for 12 projects and 9 calls for tender sent out. As a result, despite this year's late start, all projects should be underway before the summer break. Amongst others, the following working documents were presented to the STOA Panel in June:

- Communications, culture and access to new information resources: An assessment of cultural and technological obstacles to Europe's transformation into an information society (Culture Committee, MEP *Vander Taelen*);
- Security technologies for digital media (Legal Affairs Committee, MEP *Harbour*);

Further information on the projects can be found at: <http://www.europarl.eu.int/dg4/stoa/en/workplan/wp00full.htm>

### ***Culture 2000: priorities and themes for the years 2001-2004***

The objectives set up by the member states in the cultural sector are to encourage artistic and cultural co-operation between the member states and, if necessary, support and complement their action in the following areas:

- knowledge and dissemination of culture and history of the European peoples;
- conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage of European significance;
- non-commercial cultural exchanges;
- artistic and literary creation.

The first call for applications was published on 8 April. A call each year will allow cultural operators to submit applications for Community financial support. For the years 2001-2004, the calls for applications will be published in July of the preceding year.

### ***eContent: European digital content on Internet***

On 24 May, the European Commission adopted a proposal for an EU multi-annual programme that aims at stimulating the development and use of Euro-

pean digital content on the Internet and promoting the linguistic diversity of European websites in the Information Society. The initiative covers the period 2001-2005. eContent follows on from the INFO2000 and MLIS (Multilingual Information Society) programmes which concluded at the end of 1999. The three action lines are:

- Action line 1: Access to capital for start-ups;
- Action line2: Exploitation of public sector information;
- Action line 3: Linguistic and cultural customisation.

For further information please email: [econtent@cec.eu.int](mailto:econtent@cec.eu.int); fax: +352-4301-34999 or visit: <http://www.cordis.lu/econtent>

### ***IST Programme: 24 projects are now available on the web***

An overview of 24 projects supported by the 1996-97 Call for Proposals launched by the Information Society Promotion Office (ISPO) are now available at <http://www.ispo.cec.be/showcase/>.

The projects cover several aspects of the Information Society, including e-Communities, equal opportunities, education, business and consumer issues, and sustainable development. A particular objective has been to promote social inclusion.

### ***Culture: Culture Ministers debate culture policies***

The Culture Council, at its meeting on 16 May 2000, discussed the following topics:

- *MEDIA Plus*, the new aid programme for the audiovisual industry for the period 2001-2005. Broad consensus was reached on the principles applicable to audiovisual policy with the development of digital technologies. It was concluded that infrastructures and content were two aspects which should be dealt with separately and that regulation on content must be applied whatever the means of diffusion;
- The draft conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, concerning the Commission communication on „*Principles and guidelines for the Community's audiovisual policy in the digital age*“;
- The draft Council Resolution on the conservation and enhancement of European cinema heritage;
- Presentation of a report by the Presidency on „*Cultural diversity in the new international environment*“. UNESCO and the Council of Europe are rekind-

ling debate on this theme in order to clarify the issue and its political consequences;

- The European Forum for intellectuals, politicians and artists (Momentum Europa);
- The implications for the Culture Council on the European Year of Languages 2001.

### ***Education: French Council Presidency reports***

With a view to the next Education Council, Commissioner *Reding* met with *Jack Lang*, French Minister for Education, to review the co-ordination of the Commission's education activities and the French Council Presidency. The three priorities of the French Presidency correspond to those of the Commission:

- Follow-up of the Lisbon Summit: development of the role of education and co-ordination of education policies in Europe, entailing the entry of schools into the digital age (eEurope Initiative) and the participation of Education Ministers in the Luxembourg Process (employment);
- Promotion of the mobility of young people. Mobility of students under the Socrates II programme and the EP/Council proposal for a recommendation on removing obstacles to mobility, which is still under debate, were discussed. In addition, the development of virtual campuses, the increase in European universities and easier access to financing for students are major issues to the French Presidency;
- The development of language learning.

As regards research, the French Research Minister, *Roger Schwarzenberg*, pointed out several concrete measures, such as the rapid setting up of a European patent and of European houses of science and technology; the creation of a European fund to support new research procedures and of a European Science and Technology academy; installation of European technological research networks in key sectors and the launching of a European agency for scientific and technical diffusion.

### ***Enlargement: Communication strategy now adopted***

On 11 May, at the initiative of Enlargement Commissioner *Günter Verheugen* and Education and Culture Commissioner *Viviane Reding*, the Commission presented a communication strategy on enlargement (2000-2006), which seeks to provide information on the member states and the 13 applicant countries as well as to involve society in the enlargement process.

With a total of Euro 146.75 million for the period 2000-2006, financed by the PRINCE programme (information programme for the European citizen) within the EU, by the PHARE and MEDIA programmes as well as the pre-accession strategy instruments for Malta and Cyprus, in the candidate countries, the strategy pursues the following objectives:

- To inform the public in EU member states of the reasons for enlargement, to promote dialogue and to disseminate information;
- To ensure that the public in the 13 applicant countries is more familiar with the EU, explaining the links between the pace of the accession process and the progress of negotiations, as well as the implications of accession.

**Research: Euro 80 million to upgrade internet infrastructure**

On 23 May, the European Commission granted the National Research and Education Networks (NRENs) with Euro 80 million in order to upgrade the current European Internet infrastructure for education and research facilities. This infrastructure will interconnect the national research and education networks within the European Union and other European countries (Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Iceland, Israel, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Switzerland).

This initiative is a follow-up to the Commission's eEurope initiative, falling under the action point „Faster Internet for researchers and students“. According to the Commission, this network will be fully operational early in 2001. For further information please contact: *Per Haugaard*, Tel: +32 2 296 01 40 or *Ingeborg Gaspard*, Tel: + 32 2 295 22 10

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