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THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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Education, Youth and Culture

Brussels, 13-14 November 2006

President **Ms Susanna HUOVINEN**
Minister of Transport and Communications;
Ms Tanja SAARELA,
Minister of Culture;
Mr Antti KALLIOMÄKI,
Minister of Education,
of Finland

P R E S S

Main Results of the Council

The Council reached a general approach on a draft directive amending the directive on the pursuit of television broadcasting activities.

The Council adopted by unanimity its common position on a draft Decision establishing a programme of Community action in the field of consumer policy (2007-2013).

The Council adopted a common position in view of the adoption of a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council declaring 2008 as the European year of intercultural dialogue.

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- Where declarations, conclusions or resolutions have been formally adopted by the Council, this is indicated in the heading for the item concerned and the text is placed between quotation marks.
- The documents whose references are given in the text are available on the Council's Internet site <http://www.consilium.europa.eu>.
- Acts adopted with statements for the Council minutes which may be released to the public are indicated by an asterisk; these statements are available on the abovementioned Council Internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.

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PARTICIPANTS

The Governments of the Member States and the European Commission were represented as follows:

Belgium:

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Ms Isabelle WEYKMANS

Minister for Culture and the Media, the Protection of Monuments, Youth and Sport (German-speaking Community)

Czech Republic:

Ms Miroslava KOPICOVÁ

Minister for Education, Youth and Sports

Ms Petra SMOLÍKOVÁ

Deputy Minister for Culture

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Mr Brian MIKKELSEN

Minister for Culture

Mr Bertel HAARDER

Minister for Education and Church Affairs

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Mr Renard DONNEDIEU DE VABRES

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Latvia:

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Minister for Culture

Ms Baiba RIVŽA

Minister for Education and Science

Lithuania:

Mr Jonas JUČAS

Minister of Culture

Ms Roma ŽAKAITIENĖ

Minister of Education and Science

Luxembourg:

Mr Jean-Louis SCHILTZ

Minister for Communications, Minister for Cooperation and Humanitarian Action, Minister for Defence
State Secretary for Relations with Parliament, State Secretary for Agriculture, Viticulture and Rural Development, State Secretary for Culture, Higher Education and Research

Ms Octavie MODERT

Secretary of State, Ministry of Education and Culture

Hungary:

Mr Gergely ARATÓ

Minister for Tourism and Culture

Malta:

Mr Francis ZAMMIT DIMECH

Minister for Education, Cultural Affairs and Science

Netherlands:

Ms Maria van der HOEVEN

Federal Minister for Education, Science and Culture
Federal Minister for Social Security, Generations and Consumer Protection
State Secretary, Federal Chancellery

Austria:

Mr Ms Elisabeth GEHRER

Ms Ursula HAUBNER

Deputy Prime Minister, Minister for National Education
State Secretary, Ministry of Science and Higher Education
Undersecretary of State, Ministry of Culture

Mr Franz MORAK

Poland:

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Mr Krzysztof OLENDZKI

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Minister for Science, Technology and Higher Education
Minister for Parliamentary Affairs
State Secretary for Education, attached to the Minister for Education

Portugal:

Ms Isabel PIRES DE LIMA

Mr José MARIANO GAGO

Mr Augusto SANTOS SILVA

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Mr Milan ZVER

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Minister for Education and Sport
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Minister for Culture

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Mr Antti KALLIOMÄKI

Ms Susanna HUOVINEN

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Minister for Education
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Mr Lars LEIJONBORG

Minister for Culture
Minister for Education and Science

United Kingdom:

Mr Bill RAMMEL

Mr Shaun WOODWARD

Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Creative Industries and Tourism

Commission:

Ms Viviane REDING

Mr Ján FIGEL

Member

Member

The Governments of the Acceding States were represented as follows:

Bulgaria:

Ms Ekaterina VITKOVA
Ms Ina KILEVA

Deputy Minister for Education and Science
Deputy Minister of Culture

Romania:

Mr Adriana IORGULESCU
Mr Dumitru MIRON

Minister for Culture and Religious Affairs
State Secretary, Ministry of Education and Research

ITEMS DEBATED

AUDIOVISUAL

– *TV without frontiers*

Pending the European Parliament's first reading opinion, the Council reached a general approach on a draft directive amending the directive on the pursuit of television broadcasting activities¹, on the basis of a compromise text tabled by the Presidency (14616/06).

The Council addressed in particular four major issues, namely the Directive's scope, jurisdiction, product placement and quantitative advertising rules.

Following a long discussion, a compromise text was agreed that was supported by all delegations except Sweden, Ireland, Latvia, Belgium, Lithuania, Luxemburg and Austria. The Commission, Austria, Germany and Italy indicated their intention to add statements to the Council minutes.

The text agreed seeks to address the significant technological and market developments of recent years while ensuring a competitive level playing field between service providers. It establishes common minimum rules for all audiovisual media services irrespective of the transmission platform used for their delivery.

Within the notion of audiovisual media services the text distinguishes between "linear" television broadcasts (e.g. scheduled broadcasting via traditional TV, the internet or mobile phones) which "pushes" content to viewers and "non-linear" on-demand services competing with television (such as video-on-demand), which the viewer "pulls" from a network). Only the common minimum rules would apply to on-demand services, whilst additional rules, including the quantitative rules on advertising, would apply to television broadcasts.

The text of the general approach would modernise and simplify the quantitative rules on television advertising by giving more flexibility to broadcasters with regard to insertion of advertising. However, the draft directive would not increase the hourly amount of admissible advertising and it would continue to limit possible interruptions for cinematographic works, television films and news programmes. Specific restrictions on the interruption of children's programmes by advertising are also retained.

¹ Council Directive 89/552/EEC (OJ L 298, 17.10.1989, p. 23) as last amended by Directive 97/36/EC (OJ L 202, 30.7.1997, p. 60).

The general approach would introduce into the Directive rules on the issue of product placement. In principle such a practice would be forbidden, but Member States would be free to derogate from this prohibition for certain categories of programmes and subject to strict conditions to protect the viewer.

Like the existing directive, the general approach continues to use the principle of country-of-origin to determine jurisdiction between Member States. However, the text agreed includes a Community mechanism allowing a "destination" Member State in certain limited circumstances to take measures against a provider established in another Member State. Co-operation between Member States in their handling of services provided across frontiers is also legally required.

Legal basis proposed: Articles 47 and 55 of the Treaty – qualified majority required for a Council decision; co-decision procedure with the European Parliament applicable.

– ***Digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material, and digital preservation - Council conclusions***

The Council adopted the following conclusions (14466/06):

"THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Considering that:

- cultural heritage and cultural content and expressions embody and convey the European Union's common and fundamental values and demonstrate Europe's cultural and linguistic diversity;
- cultural content plays a key social and economic role. There is a real demand for digital content among citizens as well as within the research community. Digitisation and online accessibility of our cultural heritage can fuel creative efforts and support activities in other sectors, such as learning and tourism, thereby enhancing competitiveness and growth across Europe in line with the Lisbon Strategy.
- to avoid duplication of efforts and to create synergies, coordinated action at Community level is imperative; this action must nevertheless take into account that current levels of progress and coordination in Member States regarding digitisation of content and digital preservation vary considerably, as do the national priorities in these areas.

1. Welcomes

- the Commission Communication and Recommendation on 'the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material, and digital preservation' as part of the i2010: digital libraries initiative.

2. Endorses

- the underlying strategic objectives and main elements of the Commission Recommendation on the Digitisation and Online Accessibility of Cultural Material, and Digital Preservation.
- the vision of a European Digital Library as a common multilingual access point to Europe's distributed - i.e. held in different places by different organisations - digital cultural heritage, hospitable to all types of cultural material (texts, audiovisual, museum objects, archival records etc.) and targeted at delivering rapidly a critical mass of resources to the users.

3. Recognises

- the variety of efforts ongoing in Member States to digitise and make accessible online the content of their archives, libraries and museums, as well as their different stages of progress.
- the valuable coordination work done by the National Representatives Group on digitisation (NRG) to exchange Member States' experiences and monitor progress, inter alia through the Dynamic Action Plan¹
- the need to anchor this coordination work within the Community's institutional framework.

4. Underlines

- the instrumental work done at European level by CENL (the Conference of European National Librarians);
 - in organising and creating The European Library (TEL) as a gateway to the collective resources of national libraries across Europe;
 - in carrying this work forward towards the creation of the European Digital Library
- the work ongoing in the Michael² and Michael Plus projects in describing and linking digital collections of museums, libraries and archives from different Member States and providing access to these collections;
- that future work should be based on these and related initiatives, towards the goal of achieving a balanced cooperation between libraries, museums and archives;
- that while making from the outset conceptual and technical preparations for all categories of cultural material (texts, audiovisual, museum objects, archival records etc.), the European Digital Library may exploit in its early stages the potential of a critical mass of multilingual textual material;
- the importance of undertaking work in the field of digitisation, preservation and availability of content with full respect for Community and international legislation in the field of intellectual property.

¹ The Dynamic Action Plan for the EU co-ordination of digitisation of cultural and scientific content.

² Multilingual Inventory of Cultural Heritage in Europe.

5. Takes note

- of the Commission intention to carry out studies on progress in the digitisation of culture within the European Union, on the socio-economic impact of long-term preservation of digital resources, and on the socio-economic impact of public domain resources;
- of the Commission intention to co-finance a network of centres of competence for digitisation and digital preservation under the 7th Framework programme for Research and development.

6. Invites the Members States

- To address the issues related to digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation identified in the Commission Recommendation, and in particular those aspects highlighted in these conclusions;
- As first steps, in line with the indicative timeline in Annex and taking into account the different starting points in the Member States, to
 - **reinforce national strategies and targets** for digitisation and digital preservation;
 - **contribute to the European digital library**, a multilingual common access point to Europe's distributed cultural heritage;
 - **improve framework conditions** for digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation;
 - **reinforce co-ordination** within and between Member States on related issues;
 - **contribute to an effective overview of progress at European level.**

7. Invites the Commission

- As first steps and in line with the indicative timeline in Annex , to
 - **stimulate and co-ordinate work towards a European digital library** as a common multilingual access point to Europe's distributed digital cultural heritage;

- contribute to **improved policy co-ordination** on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation, in particular through the creation of a group of Member *States*' representatives to take forward the coordination work of the NRG within the Community's institutional framework, securing continuity - including effective transitional arrangements - and building on the experience and expertise gained.
- **address framework conditions** for digitisation, online accessibility and digital preservation.
- **assess overall progress** in the Member States on the relevant themes taking into account their different starting points; and to assess overall progress towards the European digital library and to report to the Council accordingly.

Annex

PRIORITY ACTIONS AND INDICATIVE¹ TIMETABLE

A. Activities and goals for Member States

1. To reinforce national strategies and targets for digitisation and digital preservation by:

- drawing up and updating plans and national strategies for digitisation of cultural material	2007
- establishing national strategies for long term preservation and deposit	Mid-2008
- developing quantitative and qualitative targets including the associated financial planning on a multi-annual basis for deposit, digitisation and online access of cultural material and long-term preservation	2007
- investigating, and where appropriate initiating and promoting public-private partnerships for digitisation	2007-2008

2. To reinforce co-ordination within and between Member States by:

- setting up national coordination mechanisms for digitisation activities, including at the regional and local levels, in the field of cultural content	2007
- exchanging information with other Member States in order to create synergies, to avoid fragmentation and duplication	2007-2008
- developing common criteria for selection of the material to be digitised with a view to achieving added value at European level	2007

3. To contribute to the European digital library by:

- preparing roadmaps and incentives for cultural institutions to bring existing and newly digitised material into the European digital library	2007
- encouraging private content holders to make their copyrighted material searchable and accessible through the common multilingual access point	2008-2009
- agreements or collective agreements between right holders and cultural institutions, such as archives, libraries and museums, by which the latter can make copyrighted material accessible online on contractual terms	2009

¹ the suggested timetable for activities and goals represent targets for Member States and the Commission but does not have a binding character.

4. To contribute to an effective overview of progress at European level by:

- assessing the results and experience gained at national level	Spring 2008
- informing the Commission of these results and experiences and on the follow-up given to the different elements of its Recommendation and of these Conclusions on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation	Spring 2008

5. To improve framework conditions for digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation by:

- having identified and initiated action to remove barriers in national legislation concerning digitisation of cultural material and its online accessibility, including for study and research purposes or other uses subject to appropriate conditions.	2008
- having mechanisms to facilitate digitisation and online access of orphan works and out of print and out of distribution works, while fully respecting content owners' interests and rights	2008
- having an established legislative or other effective framework in support of digital preservation; this should include deposit of digital cultural material with legally mandated institutions, web-harvesting by such institutions taking into account <i>inter alia</i> Community data protection law, as well as multiple copying and migration	2009
- encouraging cultural institutions to implement relevant technical standards for digital preservation within the organisational workflow of digitisation.	2008

B. Activities and goals for the Commission

1. To stimulate and co-ordinate work towards a European digital library by:

- co-ordinating and stimulating the efforts to arrive at a multilingual common access point for the distribution of cultural material	2007 onwards
- co-ordinating and stimulating work towards solutions on issues relating to standards in order to achieve interoperability, and towards effectively dealing with multilingual access	2007-2008
- providing a forum for discussion with the private sector and relevant organisations in order to outline the principles for providing material for the common access point	2007-2008
- providing financial and other resources for activities on the European level; supporting within FP7 a network of competence centres for digitisation and digital preservation in Europe, while taking fully into account the varying possibilities for Member States and the specific characteristics of different types of cultural content; supporting within FP7 technologies underpinning innovative services that could be integrated in the common multilingual access point	2007 onwards

2. To contribute to improved policy co-ordination on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation by:

- monitoring activities carried out by the Member States and supporting cooperation between the Member States	2007 onwards
- assisting Member States to identify problems and to monitor bottle-necks, and to suggest, if need be, measures to kick-start the process of digitisation	2008-2009
- setting up a group comprising experts designated by the Member States to take forward the coordination work of the NRG within the Community's institutional framework, securing continuity - including effective transitional arrangements - and building on the experience and expertise gained	2007

3. To address framework conditions by:

- proposing solutions on certain specific rights issues, such as orphan and out-of-print works, while fully respecting content owners' interests and rights, and ensuring their effectiveness in a cross-border context	2008-2009
- on the basis of identified bottlenecks, propose corrective measures at European level if "flexible coordination" fails to lead to the expected results	2008-2009

4. To assess overall progress at European level by:

- monitoring progress in the Member States and towards the European Digital Library using both quantitative and qualitative indicators based on the information collected both at national and European levels	2007 onwards
- presenting a report on progress in the Member States and on progress in the common multilingual access point, and in particular assessing the extent to which the "flexible coordination" approach has been successful	2008

CULTURE

– *European Capital of Culture*

– **Cities designated for 2010**

In accordance with Decision 1419/1999/EC¹, the Council designated Essen (Germany), Pécs (Hungary) and Istanbul (Turkey) as European Capitals of Culture for 2010 (14162/06).

– **Members of the "2011" selection panel**

The Council will appoint Mr Thomas ANGYAN (Austria) and Mr Seppo KIMANEN (Finland) as members of the "European Capitals of Culture 2011" selection panel representing the Council. The two candidates were proposed by the Austrian and Finnish delegations during the meeting of the Council, on 18 May 2006 (9148/1/06).

The decision will be entered in the minutes of the Council's meeting and, thereafter, the Presidency will inform the Commission about the Council's designation.

It is recalled that under Decision 1419/1999/EC, each year the Commission forms a selection panel, composed of seven leading independent figures who are experts on the cultural sector, which issues a report on the designation of the cities as Capitals of Culture. Under Decision 2000/C9/01², each of the two Member States holding the Presidency during the ongoing year nominates a leading figure with a view to their appointment by the Council, as its representatives in the selection panel for the following year.

¹ OJ L 166, 1.7.1999, p. 1.

² Council Decision of 17 December 1999 on the appointment by the Council of two members of the selection panel (OJ C 9, 13.1.2000, p. 1).

– *Economy of culture in Europe*

The Council held an exchange of views on economy of culture in Europe, on the basis of a working paper submitted by the Presidency (14468/06).

At the end of the debate the President could recognise that there is a real need for a harmonised statistics at European level in the field of culture that would allow the assessment of the economic impact of culture.

The delegations referred to the cultural and creative sectors as a part of the Lisbon strategy and gave their opinion on the main objectives to be included in the Lisbon agenda.

The aim of the debate was to analyse how the cultural sector can contribute to the realisation of the Lisbon Strategy, with a view to the preparation of a policy document to European Council.

YOUTH

– ***Better understanding and knowledge of youth***

The Council held an exchange of views on the contribution of youth research to a better understanding and knowledge of youth on the basis of a Presidency working paper (14473/06). The main objective of the Ministerial debate was to provide fresh impetus to the implementation of the common objectives adopted by the Resolution of 15 November 2004 on a better knowledge and understanding of youth, upon which Member States had agreed to report by the end of 2008.

Summarising the debate, the Presidency emphasised that the development of youth policies was conditional upon obtaining reliable information - both quantitative and qualitative - through independent research. Such research should focus on areas of relevance to political decision-making in the youth field.

The development of coordinated horizontal youth policies and their practical implementation should be promoted by means of a better structured dialogue between relevant actors in the youth field, which in turn implied developing a culture of consultation and dialogue between all interested parties. Networking of this kind could help improve knowledge in the youth field in an efficient manner, as well as facilitate informed policy making. To this end, the development of national networks covering policy, research, youth work and young people was to be encouraged.

Finally, the role of the European Knowledge Centre for Youth Policy was underlined, as was the importance of maintaining the quality and reliability of its work by ensuring the supply of reliable, up-to-date information via the national correspondents.

EDUCATION

– ***Modernising Higher Education in Europe***

The Council held an exchange of views on modernising higher education in Europe, including the role of the proposed European Institute of Technology (EIT), on the basis of a Presidency question paper(14482/06).

Many delegations welcomed this opportunity for a debate at European level as a complement to national reforms currently being implemented or considered. Emphasising the importance of higher education institutions for future economic growth and employment, they broadly endorsed the need for greater autonomy and accountability of those institutions and for stronger links between them and the business community.

Various delegations favoured more peer-learning initiatives, such as that contained in the United Kingdom's proposal for a compendium to be compiled of good practice in the field of higher education reform, based on Member States' and other countries' experiences.

With regard to the EIT, while most delegations were able broadly to welcome the initiative there was recognition that a large number of practical details remained to be examined , notably those concerning its funding and administration, its compatibility with existing networks and its competence to award degrees.

– ***Enhanced European cooperation on Vocational Education Training (VET) - Council conclusions***

The Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council of the European Union and the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council,

AWARE that

1. on 12 November 2002 the Council approved a Resolution¹ on the promotion of enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training. This was the basis for the declaration adopted by the Ministers responsible for Vocational Education and Training of the EU Member States, the EFTA/EEA and candidate countries, the Commission and the European Social Partners at their meeting in Copenhagen on 29 to 30 November 2002, as the strategy for improving the performance, quality and attractiveness of Vocational Education and Training (Copenhagen process);
2. based on the Council Conclusions of 15 November 2004², the first review of the process held in Maastricht on 14 December 2004 acknowledged that the visibility and profile of VET had improved at European level and that substantial progress had been made. This included a series of common tools and principles³. The Maastricht Communiqué set out priorities at national and European level and linked the Copenhagen process more firmly with the 'Education and Training 2010' work programme;

¹ OJ C 13, 18.1.2003, p.2.

² 13832/04.

³ Resolution on guidance throughout life (9286/04);
Conclusions on identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning (9600/04);
Conclusions on quality assurance in VET (9599/04).

3. since the adoption of the Maastricht Communiqué, the EUROPASS single framework for the transparency of qualifications and competencies and the Council Conclusions on the role of development of skills and competences have been adopted¹. Consultation on the European Qualifications Framework has been successfully completed and work has continued on developing a credit transfer system for VET (ECVET) which is now the subject of a public consultation.
4. the revised Lisbon strategy and its integrated guidelines for growth and jobs 2005 – 2008² reflect the central role of education and training within the European Union's agenda. It calls on the Member States to expand and improve investment in human capital and to adapt education and training systems in response to the challenges posed by globalisation, demographic change and technological innovation.
5. the 2006 joint interim report on progress under the 'Education and Training 2010' work programme³ concludes that *"the improvement of the quality and attractiveness of VET continues to be a key challenge for the future"*. It also states that *"the search for excellenceshould go hand in hand with a search for greater access and social inclusion"*;

EMPHASISE that

1. vocational education and training should provide a broad knowledge and skills base relevant to working life, highlighting at the same time excellence at all levels. Policies and practices should assess the relative impacts of investing in different levels of skills and competences. The supply of intermediary and technical skills as well as high level skills should be increased to overcome skills shortages and to help sustain innovation and the growth of the knowledge society;
2. VET has a dual role in contributing to competitiveness and in enhancing social cohesion⁴. VET policies should address all sections of the population, offering attractive and challenging pathways for those with high potential, while at the same time addressing those at risk of educational disadvantages and labour market exclusion – especially early school leavers, those with low qualifications or no qualifications at all, those with special needs, people with an immigrant background and older workers;

¹ Europass (OJ L 390, 31.12.2004, p.6) ;

Conclusions on skills and competences (OJ C 292, 24.11.2005, p.3).

² 9341/2/05.

³ *"Modernising education and training: a vital contribution to prosperity and social cohesion in Europe"* - 2006 joint interim report of the Council and of the Commission on progress under the "Education and Training 2010" work programme, (OJ C 79, 1.4.2006, p.1).

⁴ Presidency conclusions, Brussels European Council, 23/24 March 2006 (7775/06).

3. basic education should provide young people with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes necessary for further learning, employment and entrepreneurship and prepare students to follow a general education pathway or a VET pathway or a combination of both;
4. young people in VET should acquire skills and competences relevant to labour market requirements and for lifelong learning. This calls for policies to reduce drop-out rates from vocational education and training and to better facilitate school-to-work transition, e.g. by combining education and training with work through apprenticeships and work-based learning.
5. the skills and competences of the adult labour force should be promoted by encouraging the recognition of prior learning gained through training and work experience. Training opportunities should be provided for those in working life, while assessing the possibilities for and the benefits of a balanced sharing of the financial burden. At the same time, learning opportunities should be available for disadvantaged individuals and groups, especially for the less educated;
6. the diversity of European VET systems is an asset which serves as a basis for mutual learning and inspiring reforms. At the same time, this diversity makes it important to increase transparency and common understanding on quality issues, and hence mutual trust between VET systems and practices. The aim should be to promote a European VET area in which qualifications and skills acquired in one country are recognised throughout Europe, thus supporting the mobility of young people and adults.

RECOGNISE that

1. the Copenhagen process has played an essential role in emphasising the importance of VET to political decision makers. It has contributed to raising the profile of VET as part of the Lisbon strategy. The process facilitates agreeing common European goals and objectives, discussing national models and initiatives, and exchanging good examples of practice at the European level. At national level, the process has contributed to strengthening the focus on VET and has inspired national reforms.

STRESS that

1. special actions addressing VET need to be strengthened in the future. The Copenhagen process should be continued within the framework of the 'Education and Training 2010' work programme. A focused and holistic approach should be ensured, in which the different initiatives and tools are interlinked and mutually supportive, and in which VET is developed at all levels as an essential part of lifelong learning with close links to general education. Emphasis should be placed on engaging social partners and sectoral organisations in all stages of the work, and on feeding national experiences back into the developmental work at European level;

2. measures are voluntary and should be developed through bottom-up cooperation.

AGREE that

The Copenhagen and Maastricht priorities remain valid and should be reinforced in the next phase as follows:

1. Policy focused on improving the attractiveness and quality of VET

More attention should be paid by Member States to the image, status and attractiveness of VET. This calls for:

- improved guidance throughout life to take better account of the opportunities and requirements of VET and of working life, including increased career guidance, information and advice in schools;
- open VET systems which offer access to flexible, individualised pathways and create better conditions for transition to working life, progression to further education and training, including higher education, and which support the skills development of adults in the labour market;
- close links with working life, both in initial and continuing vocational education and training, and increased opportunities to learn at the workplace;
- promoting the recognition of non-formal and informal learning to support career development and lifelong learning;
- measures to increase the interest and participation of men or women in those VET fields in which they remain under-represented, for instance women in the technology field;
- developing and highlighting excellence in skills, for instance by applying world-class standards or organising skills competitions¹.

¹ Such as the European Skills Competition to be organised in the Netherlands in 2008 and the biannual World Skills Competitions.

In improving the attractiveness and quality of VET, more emphasis should be placed on good governance of VET systems and providers in delivering the VET agenda¹. This means:

- responsiveness to the needs of individuals and the labour market, including anticipation of skills needs. Particular attention should be paid to the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises;
- national quality assurance and improvement in line with the Council Conclusions on Quality Assurance in VET²;
- improving public and private investment in VET through the development of balanced and shared funding and investment mechanisms;
- increased transparency of VET systems;
- stronger leadership of institutions and/or training providers within national strategies;
- highly qualified teachers and trainers who undertake continuous professional development;
- active partnership between different decision makers and stakeholders, in particular social partners and sectoral organisations, at national, regional and local levels.

2. Development and implementation of common tools for VET

The development of common European tools should be continued in order to pave the way towards a European area of VET and to support the competitiveness of the European labour market. The aim should be for the agreed tools to be in place by 2010.

Further development of:

- (a) common European tools specifically aimed at VET, by:
 - developing and testing a European Credit Transfer System for VET (ECVET) as a tool for credit accumulation and transfer, taking into account the specificities of VET and the experience gained with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) in higher education;

¹ Key messages to the Spring European Council (7620/06).

² Conclusions on quality assurance in VET (9599/04).

- strengthening cooperation on quality improvement by using the European Network of Quality Assurance for VET (ENQA-VET) to support the creation of a common understanding on quality assurance and to foster mutual trust. Cooperation with higher education should be continued;
- (b) common European tools in which VET plays a major role, by:
- developing and testing a European Qualifications Framework (EQF) based on learning outcomes, providing greater parity and better links between the VET and HE sectors and taking account of international sectoral qualifications;
 - further developing EUROPASS as the single European framework for transparency, and tools for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning, in order to support and complement the introduction of EQF and ECVET.

Implementation of:

- (c) common European tools specifically aimed at VET, by:
- participating in the testing of ECVET and encouraging its implementation;
 - drawing on the principles underlying a Common Quality Assurance Framework, as referred to in the May 2004 Council Conclusions on quality assurance in VET, in order to promote a culture of quality improvement and wider participation in the ENQA-VET network;
- (d) common European tools in which VET plays a major role, by:
- linking national qualification systems or national qualifications frameworks to the EQF;
 - supporting national qualifications systems in incorporating international sectoral qualifications, using the EQF as a reference point;
 - promoting widespread use of EUROPASS.

3. Strengthening mutual learning

A more systematic approach is needed to strengthen mutual learning, cooperative work and the sharing of experience and know-how. This should be facilitated by:

- common concepts and agreed definitions at European level in order to make national solutions, models and standards more easily understood;
- Commission funding for research and surveys on specific topics to deepen understanding of European VET systems and practices, and their links to the labour market and other education sectors;
- monitoring by the Commission of networks, the exchange of examples of good practice and the development of mechanisms which can be used to disseminate knowledge and expertise;
- a systematic and flexible framework to support peer learning activities in the field of VET. The framework should also support decentralised peer learning.

Adequate and consistent data and indicators are the key to understanding what is happening in VET, to strengthening mutual learning and to laying the foundations for evidence-based training policy. By the time of the next Ministerial follow-up Conference in 2008 the Commission should have:

- given special attention to improving the scope, precision and reliability of VET statistics so that progress in developing VET can be evaluated;
- devoted attention to the development of the VET component within the coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks¹;
- paid particular attention to the development of statistical information on investment in and the financing of VET.

This would best be achieved by using and combining existing data to the best advantage, while ensuring adequate national/regional data on VET and consistency and comparability with other data on education and training.

¹ Council Conclusions of 24 May 2005 on new indicators in education and training (OJ C 141, 10.6.2005, p.7).

4. Taking all stakeholders on board

The success of the Copenhagen process relies on the active involvement of all stakeholders in the field of VET, including in particular the social partners at European and national level, sectoral organisations and VET providers. This calls for:

- concise and clear information on the process, its background, priorities and activities and the effective transfer of results;
- the active participation in all stages of the process of stakeholders at European, national, regional and local level;
- emphasis on involving VET providers, teachers and trainers in testing and implementing the outcomes of the process;
- the involvement, where appropriate, of learners and their organisations at national and European level.

INVITE THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION, WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE COMPETENCES,

to implement the Copenhagen process through:

- the effective use of structural funds to support VET reforms at national level;
- targeted use of the new Lifelong Learning Programme to support the process, particularly for innovation, testing, experimentation and implementation;
- the active participation of relevant Community agencies, bodies and committees;
- close cooperation on statistics, indicators and benchmarks with EUROSTAT, OECD, CEDEFOP, and ETF;
- the exchange of information, expertise and results with third countries, particularly those countries covered by the 'wider Europe neighbourhood' policy. Cooperation with high-performing countries and international organisations such as OECD should be strengthened.

The right of participation of all Member States in this work should be ensured.

In the annual reporting on the national Lisbon reform programmes special attention should be paid to progress in VET.

The integrated biennial report on the 'Education and Training 2010' work programme should include a specific part addressing VET, enabling monitoring of the progress and identifying key outcomes to be reported to the European Council."

– ***Efficiency and equity in education and training - Council conclusions***

The Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States adopted the following conclusions:

"The Council of the European Union and the representatives of the governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council,

HAVING REGARD to:

1. the strategic goal set for the European Union by the Lisbon Council of 23-24 March 2000, "to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth, with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" and the mandate of the Lisbon Council to the Education Council to undertake "a general reflection on the concrete future objectives of education systems, focusing on common concerns and priorities while respecting national diversity"¹;
2. the report of the Education Council of 12 February 2001 on "*The concrete future objectives of education and training systems*" submitted to the European Council in Stockholm on 23 and 24 March 2001 setting out three strategic objectives and thirteen associated objectives²;
3. the first and second strategic objectives of the 'Education & Training 2010' work programme, "*Improving the quality and effectiveness of education and training systems in the EU*" - including its associated objective "*Making the best use of resources*"³ - and "*Facilitating the access to all to education and training systems*" - including its associated objectives "*Open learning environment*" and "*Supporting active citizenship, equal opportunities and social cohesion*" ;
4. the Commission communication of 10 January 2003 on "*Investing efficiently in education and training: an imperative for Europe*", which calls for "*a substantial increase in investment in human resources*" and for "*spending existing resources more efficiently*"⁴;

¹ Presidency conclusions, Lisbon European Council, 23-24 March 2000 (SN 100/1/00 REV 1).

² "*The concrete future objectives of education and training systems*" - Report from the Education Council to the European Council (5980/01).

³ Detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe (OJ C 142, 14.6.2002).

⁴ "*Investing efficiently in education and training: an imperative for Europe*" - Commission Communication (5269/03).

5. the Council conclusions of 5 May 2003 on Reference Levels of European Average Performance in Education and Training (Benchmarks) which stressed that "*the Council has agreed to establish a series of reference levels of European average performance... which will be used as one of the tools for monitoring the implementation*" of the 'Education & Training 2010' work programme¹.
6. the joint interim report of the Council and the Commission of 26 February 2004 on the implementation of the 'Education & Training 2010' work programme, which emphasises the "*urgent need to invest more, and more efficiently and effectively in human resources*" and calls for "*a higher level of public sector investment ... and, where appropriate, a higher level of private investment, particularly in higher education, adult education and continuing vocational training*"²;
7. the joint interim report of the Council and the Commission of 23 February 2006 on the implementation of the 'Education & Training 2010' work programme, which underlines that giving equal consideration to the efficiency, quality and equity objectives of the education and training systems is a "*sine qua non of achieving the Lisbon goals while strengthening the European social model*" and that "*there is no trade-off between efficiency and equity*" and further that "*in particular, investment in pre-primary education is of paramount importance for preventing school failure and social exclusion*"³;
8. the conclusions of the Spring European Council of 23-24 March 2006, which stressed that "*education and training are critical factors to develop the EU's long-term potential for competitiveness, as well as for social cohesion*", that "*reforms must ... be stepped up to ensure high quality education systems which are both efficient and equitable*" and that "*investments in education and training produce high returns which substantially outweigh the costs and reach far beyond 2010*"⁴;

¹ OJ C 134, 7.6.2003, p. 3.

² "*Education & Training 2010: the success of the Lisbon strategy hinges on urgent reforms*" - Joint interim report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe (6905/04).

³ "*Modernising education and training: a vital contribution to prosperity and social cohesion in Europe*" - 2006 joint interim report of the Council and of the Commission on progress under the 'Education and Training 2010' work programme (OJ C 79, 1.4.2006, p. 1).

⁴ Presidency conclusions, Brussels European Council, 23/24 March 2006 (7775/06).

9. the Commission communication on "*Efficiency and equity in European education and training systems*"¹ which invites the Member States to develop a culture of evaluation and which, having been prepared in collaboration with research networks, represents a positive step towards the further development of evidence-based policy in education and training.

NOTE that

1. education and training are fields for the relevant authorities in individual Member States to organise and resource in accordance with national legislation, policies and practices. At the same time, however, there is a need for European cooperation in order to learn from one another's experiences and good practices, and for indicators and benchmarks in order to follow progress. Successful education and training policies in a lifelong learning context require a cross-sectoral approach in conjunction with other relevant policies, especially those in the fields of research and innovation, employment, economic affairs, social and health care, youth and culture.

STATE that

1. education and training, as essential contributors to democracy, social cohesion and sustainable economic growth, should be seen as a priority investment for the future. The challenge for Member States within their lifelong learning strategies is to identify those priorities for education investments that will impact most efficiently on the quality and equity of learning outcomes;
2. improving efficiency and equity in education and training is crucial in the face of the challenges posed by globalisation, demographic changes, rapid technological developments and increasing pressure on public budgets. Despite the tight constraints on public spending, there is widespread recognition of the need to ensure adequate – and where appropriate increased – funding for human resources and therefore to consider how to increase and/or make the best use of private contributions;
3. inequities in education and training systems, resulting in outcomes such as low levels of achievement, school drop-outs and early school leaving, engender heavy hidden social costs for the future which can far outweigh the investments made. The development of efficient and equitable high quality education and training systems contributes significantly towards reducing the risks of unemployment, social exclusion and wasted human potential in a modern knowledge-based economy;

¹ "*Efficiency and equity in European education and training systems*" - Communication from the Commission to the Council and to the European Parliament (12677/06).

4. quality is a common objective for all forms of education and training in the European Union and should be regularly monitored and evaluated. Quality is not only a matter of learning outcomes or delivery of tuition, but also of how well education and training systems cater for individual, social and economic needs, as well as of strengthening equity and improving well-being;
5. the motivation, skills and competences of teachers, trainers, other teaching staff and guidance and welfare services, as well as the quality of school leadership, are key factors in achieving high quality learning outcomes. The efforts of teaching staff should be supported by continuous professional development and by good cooperation with parents, pupil welfare services and the wider community. In addition, high quality teaching and learning environments ensure good conditions for learning and contribute to positive learning outcomes;
6. research evidence has shown that in the long term pre-primary education and targeted early intervention programmes can bring the highest rates of return over the whole lifelong learning process, especially for the most disadvantaged. They produce positive human and socio-economic results that carry over into further education and adulthood. Whilst respecting the responsibility of the Member States for organising their education and training systems, there is also some research evidence to suggest that, in certain cases, differentiating pupils at too early an age into separate schools of different types on the basis of ability may have negative effects on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils;
7. as learning communities, educational institutions should focus on the wider learning environment in order to promote and maintain efficiency, equity and general well-being. Special measures are needed to identify and support pupils with special educational needs. These measures include ensuring sufficient numbers of specially trained teaching and guidance staff together with a high standard of pupil welfare services and adequate resources. Although the cross-sectoral co-operation needed for early intervention and other special measures aimed at ensuring equity in education and training inevitably entail additional costs, in the long term they pay dividends by helping to avoid future costs resulting from exclusion;
8. improving access to upper secondary level education and reducing rates of early school leaving are crucial for increasing the employability of individuals in a modern knowledge-based society and for fostering social inclusion and active citizenship, as well as for strengthening the European social model. As the labour market demand for skills rises, it is increasingly important to give the younger generation access to qualifications and skills, thereby improving their prospects for employment and social integration;

9. the need to modernise Europe's universities, given their interlinked roles in the fields of education, research and innovation, has been recognised not only as a pre-condition for the success of the broader Lisbon Strategy, but also as part of a general move towards an increasingly global and knowledge-based economy. The growth in student numbers and cost of high-quality education and research will require increased and/or more effective use of both public and private resources. High quality higher education also has a key role to play in education and training as a whole, by educating future teaching staff and updating and renewing the whole knowledge base of education;
10. vocational education and training have a significant impact on employment and social integration. Ensuring relevant, high quality qualifications for young people and improving the skills and competences of the low-skilled and disadvantaged groups bring substantial economic gains, even in the short term. Competence-based qualifications frameworks and other mechanisms for recognising prior learning promote efficiency and equity by taking into account non-formal and informal learning outcomes in addition to formal qualifications. Encouraging partnerships between stakeholders - including the social partners and sectoral organisations - could also enhance the effectiveness and attractiveness of vocational education and training programmes.
11. rapid technological development together with changes in the demographic structure of Europe make it necessary to invest more in updating and upgrading the skills, qualifications and key competences of adults, especially the low-skilled. In the short term, targeting investments on updating and upgrading existing skills and competences of the labour force is a rapid way of contributing towards economic growth and competitiveness, and of discouraging early retirement of the ageing work force. Adult learning also has a key role to play in providing new key competences, such as digital literacy, and thus contributing towards greater social inclusion and active participation in community and society, including after retirement;

INVITE THE MEMBER STATES to

1. further consider whether the present arrangements for funding, governing and managing their education and training systems adequately reflect the need to ensure both efficiency and equity, and so make optimum use of resources. With that in view, they are invited to examine possible ways of improving the present arrangements, in order to avoid the hidden but high costs of educational inequity;
2. ensure the efficient targeting of education and training reforms and investment, both in the long term and the short term, in order to meet the needs of the knowledge-based society through improved quality and equity, particularly by focusing on pre-primary education, targeted early intervention programmes and equitable education and training systems that are aimed at providing opportunities, access, treatment and outcomes which are independent of socio-economic background and other factors which may lead to educational disadvantage. In addition, the provision of high quality teaching in disadvantaged areas should be particularly encouraged.

3. ensure adequate funding for human resources and, where appropriate, increase public funding and encourage greater complementary private contributions, in order to secure more equitable access to higher education. The modernisation of the higher education and research sectors is also important to improve their efficiency. Consideration should also be given to fostering collaborative links with business in areas of research and development;
4. ensure adequate funding of adult education and continuing vocational education and training, and encourage active partnerships with employers in order to focus on the skills needs of the economy, including at regional and local levels;
5. encourage research into the outcomes of education reforms and investments and into the social benefits resulting from them. Coherent, relevant, reliable, evidence-based information is the basis for accountability as well as for taking the action needed to achieve quality, equity and efficiency throughout the education and training system. At the same time, monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance should provide objective and transparent feed-back and support for the development of teaching and learning methods and practice;

INVITE THE COMMISSION AND THE MEMBER STATES to

1. work together with the relevant research networks, in order to provide more comprehensive and integrated analyses in support of education and training reforms and, where appropriate, develop internationally comparable indicators on the efficiency and equity of education and training systems;
2. encourage and support research into the social and economic impact of education and training reforms and investments both at national and international level. There is a need for more research, particularly in sectors that are not currently sufficiently researched - such as pre-primary education, vocational training, lifelong learning and the economics of education, in particular the impact of private contributions;
3. make use of relevant research results and existing data to combine quality, equity and efficiency dimensions in the preparation of both the 'Education & Training 2010' national reports and the 2008 joint interim report, as well as in relation to a possible proposal for common objectives for European education and training systems and their promotion beyond 2010;
4. design and implement peer-learning activities in the field of efficiency and equity in the framework of the 'Education & Training 2010' work programme;
5. make appropriate use of the Lifelong Learning Programme, the Structural Funds and the Seventh Research Framework Programme to support the efficiency and equity aspects of education and training systems."

– ***European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF)***

Pending the European Parliament's first reading opinion, the Council agreed a general approach on a draft recommendation on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for lifelong learning (14478/06).

The draft recommendation aims at providing a common language to describe qualifications, thereby increasing transparency, improving comparability and facilitating the recognition of different qualifications acquired under the various EU education and training systems and thus promoting the mobility of citizens and, in particular, of students within Europe.

Legal basis proposed: Articles 149 (4) and 150 (4) of the Treaty – qualified majority required for a Council decision; co-decision procedure with the European Parliament applicable.

– ***OTHER BUSINESS***

The Council was briefed on the following items:

- Council work plan in the field of culture 2005-2006
 - Mobility Collections (action plan for the EU promotion of Museum collections' mobility and loan standards) (14721/06)
 - Extension of the Work plan 2005-2006 until 31 December 2007 (14722/06)
 - *Intervention from the Presidency*
- European Heritage Label
 - *Intervention from the Greek delegation, supported by the French delegation*
- EU-Russia Expert meeting on the implementation of the culture road map of the Fourth common space (14815/06)
 - *Intervention from the Presidency*
- Nomination of Guimarães as European Capital of Culture for 2012 (14365/06)
 - *Intervention from the Portuguese delegation*
- Candidature of Wrocław for the organisation of the EXPO 2012 world exhibition
 - *Intervention from the Polish delegation*
- Results of the European Cultural Meetings Europe of Neighbours: New Perspectives in Lublin (12-13 October, 2006) (15009/06)
 - *Intervention from the Polish delegation*
- Commission Recommendation on fair compensation for private copying : copyright levies reform (14706/06)
 - *Intervention from the French delegation*

- Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning
 - *Intervention from the Presidency*
- Recommendation on European Quality Charter for Mobility
 - *Intervention from the Presidency*
- Proposal to develop a European teaching aid as an introduction to the history of the arts in Europe (14383/06)
 - *Intervention from the French delegation*

OTHER ITEMS APPROVED

CULTURE

European year of intercultural dialogue 2008

The Council adopted a common position in view of the adoption of a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council declaring 2008 as the European year of intercultural dialogue (14153/06).

The text will be sent to the European Parliament with a view to the second reading, in the context of the codecision procedure.

The overall objectives of the European year are to contribute to:

- promoting intercultural dialogue as a process in which all those living in the EU can improve their ability to deal with a more open and complex cultural environment, where coexist different identities and beliefs,
- highlighting intercultural dialogue as an opportunity to contribute to and benefit from a diverse society, not only in Europe but also in the world,
- raising the awareness of all those living in the EU, in particular young people, of the importance of developing an active European citizenship,
- highlighting the contribution of different cultures and expressions of cultural diversity to the heritage and ways of life of the Member States.

The activities of the European year will be developed around three types of action:

- cofinancing (up to 80% of the total cost) of actions on a community scale aiming at raising awareness of the objectives of the European year, particularly among young people;
- cofinancing (up to 50 % of the total cost) of actions on a national scale with a strong European dimension;
- actions on a Community scale, including information and promotion activities, and surveys, studies and consultation with transnational networks and civil society stakeholders to assess the preparation for and impact of the European year.

The budget for the European year is set at 10 million Euros.

YOUTH

European Citizenship - Council resolution

The Council adopted the following resolution:

"the Council of the European Union and the representatives of the governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council

whereas

1. In its Resolution of 27 June 2002¹ the Council adopted the open method of coordination as a new framework for European cooperation in the youth field and endorsed the four thematic priority areas for youth highlighted in the Commission's White Paper of November 2001 entitled "*A new impetus for youth*", namely participation, information, voluntary activities and a greater understanding and knowledge of youth;
2. In its Resolution of 25 November 2003², the Council adopted common objectives for participation by and information for young people under the open method of coordination and agreed to report on the implementation of those objectives by the end of 2005;
3. The European Council of March 2005³ adopted the European Youth Pact as one of the instruments contributing to the achievement of the Lisbon objectives;
4. In its Resolution of 24 May 2005⁴ on implementing the common objectives for youth information, the Council agreed to focus on increased networking among youth-oriented information structures and on the continuous training of those involved in the youth information field;

¹ O.J. C 168, 13.07.2002, p.2.

² O.J. C 295, 5.12.2003, p.6.

³ 7619/1/05. Conclusion 37

⁴ O.J. C 141, 10.06.2005, p.5.

5. In its Resolution of 24 May 2005¹ on increasing participation by young people in the system of representative democracy, the Council agreed to meet in 2006 to review progress on this objective on the basis of national reports on the participation priority;
6. In its Resolution of 24 May 2005 on the evaluation of activities conducted in the framework of European cooperation in the youth field², the Council agreed upon measures to further develop procedures for implementing the open method of coordination;
7. In its Resolution of 15 November 2005³ on addressing the concerns of young people, the Council invited the Commission to develop a structured dialogue and called on the Commission and the Member States to evaluate the framework of European cooperation in the youth field in 2009;
8. In its Communication of 20 July 2006⁴, the Commission proposed to confirm the relevance and validity of the common objectives on participation by and information for young people and to adapt and to intensify implementation of the adopted lines of action. The Commission also proposed concrete actions for structuring dialogue with young people and reinforcing the governance of the open method of coordination;

NOTING THAT

1. In its European Youth Information Charter the European Youth Information and Counselling Agency lays down a number of guidelines for minimum standards and quality measures which may serve as elements of a comprehensive, coherent and coordinated approach to youth information work, which is a part of youth policy;
2. In its revised European Charter on the Participation of Young People in Local and Regional Life, the Council of Europe highlighted the importance of creating the conditions for genuine dialogue and partnership between young people and local and regional authorities and enabling young people and their representatives to be full actors in the policies affecting them;

EMPHASISE THAT

1. the socio-economic and cultural challenges posed by the decline in the proportion of young people in the European population should be reflected in EC policies on youth and generations;

¹ O.J. C 141, 10.06.2005, p.3.

² O.J. C 141, 10.06.2005, p. 1.

³ O.J. C 292, 24.11.2005, p. 5.

⁴ 11957/06.

2. cross-sectoral youth policies are of great importance to the efficient implementation of the Lisbon Strategy objectives for growth, jobs and citizenship policies;
3. the common priorities for participation by and information for young people have provided an impetus for national youth policies and remain essential for promoting active citizenship among young people, especially those with fewer opportunities;
4. youth organisations play a key role in facilitating and promoting youth participation and supporting young people in achieving their full potential;
5. for the development of youth policies, it is essential to engage young people, those active in youth work and youth organisations, as well as youth researchers - recognising their respective areas of competence - in policy-shaping discussions on matters affecting young people;
6. the concept of active citizenship should be broadened to encompass not only its social and political dimensions, but also its cultural, economic and evolving technological aspects;
7. the various forms of active citizenship which exist should be considered as an opportunity for enhancing democracy and bringing new topics to the political agenda;
8. the open method of coordination in the youth field should be reinforced as a means of better implementing the common objectives, when developing national youth policy programmes and strategies.

AGREE THAT

1. the relevance and validity of the common objectives for participation by and information for young people adopted in 2003 are confirmed;
2. the lines of action adopted for the common objectives for participation by and information for young people, as described in the Annex hereto, will be adapted and improved;
3. fora for debate and dialogue with young people, those active in youth work and youth organisations, and youth researchers, should be better structured and further developed, from the local to the European level;
4. the opinions and concerns of young people should be taken into account through both bottom-up and top-down dialogue processes, in order to ensure the inclusion of those aspects of young people's lives which they themselves consider relevant;

5. due account should be taken of this structured dialogue and its outcome in policy-making at the relevant levels;
6. an informal forum composed of representatives of young people, the current and future Council Presidencies, the European Parliament and the Commission should be set up and should meet regularly, in order to ensure consistency and continuity between agendas in the youth field;
7. in order to increase young people's sense of European citizenship, advantage should be taken of other initiatives such as the Commission's Plan D for Democracy, Dialogue and Debate¹;
8. the priority themes to be discussed until 2009 within this structured dialogue are social inclusion and diversity in 2007, intercultural dialogue in 2008 and perspectives for continued cooperation in the youth field in 2009. These issues should be discussed in parallel with the priority themes tackled under the Youth OMC and the European Youth Pact, as well as with horizontal priorities agreed upon in the youth field, such as anti-discrimination and health. These themes would be further defined by the Presidencies in accordance with their particular agendas.

INVITE THE MEMBER STATES TO

1. identify, by the end of March 2007, those lines of action for participation and information on which they intend to concentrate and to define concrete measures and/or action plans for their implementation;
2. set up preparatory and follow-up mechanisms to ensure the effective implementation of the common objectives in cooperation with the relevant actors, *inter alia* young people, youth organisations, youth researchers and local and regional authorities;
3. promote the common objectives for participation and information amongst regional and local authorities, youth organisations and young people and closely cooperate with regional and local authorities in order to ensure the fullest possible implementation of those objectives;
4. indicate, when reporting on the common objectives for greater knowledge and understanding of youth at the end of 2008, how the identified lines of action for the common objectives for participation by and information for young people have been implemented.

¹ 14775/05 and 9393/06.

NOTE THAT THE COMMISSION INTENDS TO

1. launch a youth-specific Eurobarometer;
2. mobilise European youth information networks¹ to support the structured dialogue;
3. further develop the European Youth Portal;
4. organise together with relevant partners in the participating countries, and on a regular basis, a European Youth week with the participation of Commissioners and representatives of the other European institutions, preceded by a European youth portal consultation whenever possible;
5. arrange encounters with young people who do not usually have contacts with the European institutions.

INVITE THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION TO

1. ensure that the process of the open method of coordination remains open and transparent and that the best possible use is made of the information provided by that process;
2. develop and support a continuous and structured dialogue aimed at ensuring a timely and effective contribution by young people and other relevant actors in the youth field towards the formulation of policies relevant to young people's lives;
3. collaborate with the relevant actors, *inter alia* local and regional authorities, as well as with educational institutions and non-governmental organisations, in setting up this structured dialogue;
4. endeavour to ensure that the structured dialogue brings together those involved in youth issues either directly or indirectly, in order to develop a more coherent and cross-sectoral approach to such issues;
5. encourage an inclusive approach to this dialogue involving young people engaged in various and innovative forms of active citizenship, non-organised young people and young people with fewer opportunities and create conditions for the equal participation of all young people;

¹ such as ERYICA, EURODESK and EYCA

6. encourage peer learning activities on information for and participation by young people, where appropriate involving European countries which are not members of the EU;
7. set up on a voluntary basis a working group at European level to consider practical means of assessing the impact of implementation of the common objectives for participation by and information for young people. The Commission is invited to report back to the Council on the results achieved by this working group;
8. make the best use of the 2007 – 2013 "Youth in Action" programme to support this structured dialogue;
9. discuss the implementation of this structured dialogue at national and European level in the context of the evaluation of the framework of European cooperation in the youth field in 2009."

TRANSPORT

Agreement on air services with Australia

The Council adopted a decision approving the signing and provisional application of the agreement between the EU and Australia on certain aspects of air services.

The agreement is the result of negotiation under a mandate by which the Commission can negotiate with any third country with a view to bringing Member States' existing bilateral aviation agreements with that country into line with Community law.

Regulation of the operation of aeroplanes

The Council adopted a directive on the regulation of the operation of aeroplanes covered by Part II, Chapter 3, Volume 1 of Annex 16 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation, second edition (codified version) (*PE-CONS 3635/06*).

The directive codifies and repeals Directive 92/14/EEC of 2 March 1992, substituting the various acts incorporated in it by bringing them together with only such amendments as are required by the codification exercise itself.

Carriage of goods by road

The Council adopted a directive establishing common rules for certain types of carriage of goods by road (codified version) (*PE-CONS 3637/06*).

The directive codifies and repeals the first Council Directive of 23 July 1962 on the establishment of certain common rules for international transport, substituting the various acts incorporated in it by bringing them together with only such amendments as are required by the codification exercise itself.

RESEARCH

Agreement with Korea

The Council adopted a Decision concerning the conclusion of the Agreement for co-operation between the European Atomic Energy Community and the Government of the Republic of Korea in the field of fusion energy research.

This Agreement is aimed at intensifying cooperation between the Community and Korea in the areas covered by their respective fusion programs, on the basis of mutual benefit and overall reciprocity, in order to develop the scientific understanding and technological capability underlying a fusion energy system.

CONSUMER POLICY

Community action programme in the field of consumer policy (2007-2013)*

The Council adopted by unanimity its common position on a draft Decision establishing a programme of Community action in the field of consumer policy (2007-2013) (*13241/06*).

The programme has two main objectives:

- (1) to ensure a high level of consumer protection, notably through improved evidence, better consultation and better representation of consumers' interests.
- (2) to ensure the effective application of consumer protection rules notably through enforcement cooperation, information, education and redress.

The programme provides for a list of 11 consumer actions, from which specific projects will be selected annually in the work programme.

The financial contribution from the EU budget is fixed at EUR 156,8 million.

INTERNAL MARKET

Electrical equipment for use within certain voltage limits

The Council adopted a directive on the harmonisation of the laws of Member States relating to electrical equipment designed for use within certain voltage limits (codified version) (*PE-CONS 3638/06*).

The directive codifies and repeals Directive 73/23/EEC of 19 February 1973, substituting the various acts incorporated in it by bringing them together with only such amendments as are required by the codification exercise itself.

FISHERIES

Data landings

The Council adopted in first reading a Regulation on the submission of statistical data on landings of fishery products in Member States and repealing Regulation 1382/91. (*14283/06*)
