

EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
Directorate-General "Information,  
Communication, Culture and Audiovisual"



## a newssheet for journalists

Weekly N° 2/94

17 - 24 January 1994

### SUMMARY

- 2 TRAINING: One way of tackling unemployment  
European Commission has proposed a European programme,  
LEONARDO.
- 3 EDUCATION: Giving a European dimension to schools and  
universities  
European Commission proposes a new programme,  
SOCRATES.
- 4 MOTOR VEHICLES: Fewer price differences in the EU in  
November ...  
... at the end of a particularly bad year for sales.
- 5 TECHNOLOGIES: High marks for the programme bringing  
together universities and business  
The Twelve and seven "wise men" find the COMETT  
programme useful.
- 6 IMMIGRATION: The doors to the European Union are open  
... but just how far, varies from country to country.
- 7 SOCIETY: A strategy to fight pornography  
European Parliament resolution seeks to protect children in  
particular.

Mailed from Brussels X

The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the official views of the institutions of the Community.  
Reproduction authorized.  
200 rue de la Loi • T-120 7/56 • 1049 Brussels • Belgium • Tel.: 299 90 52 • Fax: 299 92 08

europa focus

### TRAINING: One way of tackling unemployment

The European Commission has proposed a European programme, LEONARDO.

Leonardo da Vinci was as much at home painting portraits as preparing the plans for a bridge - not to mention the drawings of his numerous inventions. The average European is not being asked to display the same degree of versatility. But in today's world adaptability and the ability to acquire new skills over one's entire working life are at a premium. In order to boost vocational training, along the lines set out in the recent White Paper on competitiveness and employment\*, even while continuing the activities launched since the end of the 1980s, the European Commission proposed to the Twelve, at the end of last December, a new programme, to be known as LEONARDO.

This programme, covering the period from 1995 to 1999, would take over from the four European programmes which come to an end this October. The four are: COMETT, which enables students, engineers and researchers to train in other European countries; PETRA, which seeks to give young Europeans an opportunity to receive their first cross-border vocational training; FORCE, which facilitates exchanges between the Twelve in the field of continuing training and qualifications and, finally, EUROTECNET, which encourages the use of new technologies in vocational training at the European level.

The European Commission is of the view that training has a key role to play in the fight against unemployment and social exclusion. From this point of view the LEONARDO programme should allow the maximum number of people and organizations to take advantage of the best training methods in use in the EU, by putting the emphasis on distance learning. The Commission has asked EU ministers for more than ECU 800m.\*\* for five years. This represents a sharp increase over the ECU 437m. devoted to the four current programmes over four, five or seven years.

\* See Eurofocus N° 1/94

\*\* 1 ECU = UK£0.76 or IR£0.79

EDUCATION: Giving a European dimension to schools and universities  
European Commission proposes a new programme, SOCRATES.

To give a European dimension to education at all levels, from schools to universities, is the aim of the SOCRATES programme, which the European Commission proposed to the Twelve in early January. The current exchange programmes among the Twelve in the educational field, which come to an end this December, are limited to higher education. This is the case as regards ERASMUS, which covers a variety of disciplines, and LINGUA, the language teaching programme. These two programmes have made it possible for tens of thousands of students and teachers to spend anywhere from a few weeks to a few months in another EU country than their own. The Commission is now proposing to continue these activities, in the framework of SOCRATES, between 1995 and 1999.

It is not a question, however, of organizing the same kind of exchanges for primary and secondary schools: given the numbers enrolled in these schools, some tens of thousands of beneficiaries would be no more than a drop in the ocean. To have an impact, such an exchange programme would require very large sums of money. Even so, it is possible to "provide an introduction to Europe" with more limited means, according to Antonio Ruberti, the European Commissioner with responsibility for education and research.

By taking advantage of the powers which the Treaty of Maastricht gives the European Union in the field of primary and secondary education, SOCRATES would make it possible to provide financial support for cooperation between schools in different EU countries as well as for the creation of European networks of teaching establishments. Besides, the programme should facilitate the teaching of immigrant and gipsy children.

For the SOCRATES programme as a whole the Commission is asking the Twelve for just over ECU one billion\* over five years, a sharp increase over the ECU 600m. budgeted for the period 1990-94. Over half the sum would be devoted to higher education.

\* 1 ECU = UK£0.76 or IRE£0.79

MOTOR VEHICLES: Fewer price differences in the EU in November ...  
... at the end of a particularly bad year for sales.

Differences in car prices tended to narrow on the whole across the European Community between May and November of last year. Even so, important differences remain, particularly for small and "mini" models, according to the European Commission, which compared the November 1 prices of 23 makes and 72 models with those in force on May 1. The comparison was not made any easier by the changes in exchange rates which took place, following the monetary crisis in August. Besides, it was not by chance that the lowest ECU prices were to be found in Spain and Portugal, two countries which devalued their currencies, while the highest prices were in force in Germany, where the currency remained unchanged.

After eliminating the effects of exchange rate variations - that is to say, by using the ECU rate in May to evaluate prices in November - the Commission concluded that motor vehicle manufacturers on the whole have reduced the differences in prices to be found between one EU country and another. Thus in 90% of cases, the price differences for the same model no longer exceed 20%. However, for one small car in three the differences exceed 20%. This is also the case for two out of five "mini-cars". On the whole, differences in the prices of Japanese cars are smaller than for their European counterparts.

As in May, the Commission's survey covered only 10 of the 12 EU countries. Denmark and Greece were excluded: given the very high VAT and other taxes in force in these two countries, manufacturers quote "abnormally" low prices which are exclusive of taxes. This could be of interest to motorists in other EU countries, given that VAT is paid in the country of registration. But it has yet to be proved that such cross-border purchases no longer face obstacles.

Besides, the Commission noted a tendency for prices to fall between last May and November. The fact is that car sales fell last year, prompting manufacturers to reduce prices. According to the estimates published end December by Eurostat, the EU's statistical office, sales of new cars fell by nearly 15% in the EU as a whole, while the number of new registrations hardly exceeded one million. The last time registrations fell to this level was in 1985.

The Commission will continue to keep an eye on car prices this year, in order both to keep consumers informed and to reach a decision on the fate of the present system of sales through exclusive dealer networks, which has been authorized until next year.

TECHNOLOGIES: High marks for the programme bringing together universities and business

The Twelve and seven "wise men" find the COMETT programme useful.

In Europe, the academic and business communities seldom meet, as has often been pointed out. In any case, the European COMETT programme, which seeks to bring together these two different worlds across national frontiers since 1987, has recently been showered with compliments - a favourable omen in itself. Most of the Twelve are of the view that this programme meets an important need. What is more, a committee of seven "wise men", drawn from several EU countries and from both the educational and business communities, believes it should be strengthened and its budget increased.

Since 1987, COMETT, the Community programme for teaching and training in technologies, has enabled some 25,000 students to undergo training in a business located in another European country. The programme has also made it possible to organize some 7,000 courses. More than 22,000 organisms, including 13,000 businesses, have taken part in the COMETT programme.

According to the seven wise men, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) must be encouraged to take a more active part in the programme. They also want greater emphasis placed on the continuing training of specialists in technologies already in operation, and simpler administrative procedures. The second stage of COMETT is set to end this December. This assessment will help European leaders to prepare for the future, in a field in which the challenges facing Europe seem formidable.

IMMIGRATION: The doors to the European Union are open ...

... but just how far, varies from country to country.

Germany received 1.2 million immigrants in 1991; at the same time some 600,000 people emigrated from Germany, leaving the country with a positive net immigration of over 600,000. Portugal, on the other hand, had more emigrants than immigrants: those leaving the country exceeded those entering it by some 25,000. Since 1985 there has been a steady increase in net immigration for the EU as a whole, although net immigration was very small between 1980 and 1985.

There are a number of reasons for this increase in immigration flows. In addition to the traditional quest for work and better living conditions, they include the upheavals in Central and Eastern Europe. But an accurate analysis of migration flows is difficult, given that some countries collect data relating only to emigration, others to immigration - and yet others have no data at all. In addition, the new regularisation laws adopted by Spain (1989) and Italy (1990) have affected migration statistics: they have made "immigrants" of people who might have been living in these two countries for a long time, even though they did not move physically but only changed their status from illegal to legal. What is more, most EU countries are finding it difficult to implement international recommendations regarding migration statistics, so that the reliability and comparability of statistics cannot be taken for granted.

Even so, the analysis carried out by Eurostat, the EU's statistical office, is not without interest. It throws light on a number of important aspects of legal migration flows. (The study disregards illegal immigrants.)

To begin with, it is clear that while emigration from Britain, Belgium, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands has remained stable during the last 10 years, immigration into these countries has increased rapidly, particularly between 1987 and 1989. If Germany had the highest immigration and emigration flows in 1991, it is tiny Luxembourg which had the highest percentage of immigrants and emi-

grants. The 11,000 immigrants entering Luxembourg in 1991 amounted to 2.8% of its total population, while the 1.2m. immigrants who entered Germany made up only 1.5% of its total population.

Greece, however, witnessed a drop in immigration of all national origins, and in particular of Greeks returning home as well as of immigrants from Central and Eastern Europe. It must not be forgotten that nationals returning to their mother country are regarded as immigrants for statistical purposes; indeed, they account for half the migration flows in Denmark, Spain and Italy. As for their characteristics, migrants tend to be young (they are mainly between the ages of 20 and 49), while men outnumber women.

#### SOCIETY: A strategy to fight pornography

European Parliament resolution seeks to protect children in particular.

Responsibility for the prevention and eventual repression of pornography lies with the Member States of the European Union. But the EU also has a part to play, given that some aspects of this problem are linked to the elimination of frontiers between the Twelve.

The European Parliament would like a hard-hitting campaign against pornography, which it wants severely curbed, especially when children are involved. It has just proposed the launch of a European strategy and, to this end, is asking that the protection of the victims of pornography be implemented by means of a directive or, at the very least, of a framework programme embodying in particular some of the recommendations of the Council of Europe. This text would deal with the collection and exchange of information regarding the disappearance of children and the underground international adoption and prostitution networks. It would also provide for the harmonization of penal policies and the

adoption of measures penalizing the production, trade, detention and exchange of pornographic material using children.

The EP resolution also proposes the introduction of a self-regulatory system, the establishment of a professional code of good conduct, a ban on publicity extolling the merits of products of a pornographic nature and the introduction of effective classification systems, thus making it possible to check on different pornographic productions and on their diffusion. Euro-MPs also want to regulate the distribution as well as the timing of television programmes. They also envisage the adoption of fiscal and financial measures penalizing firms which manufacture and market pornographic products, as also the possibility of seizing their profits and withdrawing from sale these same products in the event of an infamous sentence, and increased penalties as well as a longer period of prescription for offenses committed in this field.

As the report by Mr. Jean-Thomas Nordmann makes clear, Euro-MPs are aware of the difficulties which the problem of pornography presents, inasmuch as it can give rise to a conflict between several freedoms. But they take the view that it no longer is a question, as it was in the 1970s, of defending pornography as a symbol of sexual liberation. Recent developments in fact suggest that pornography has become something of a bore and no longer arouses guilt feelings. Video cassettes and certain television channels have largely replaced cinema halls specializing in adult films. In France, for example, sales of cinema tickets fell from 10.6 million in 1976 to 2 million in 1985 - and are still falling. At the same time, out of the 850,000 video cassettes sold legally in France in 1986, often in supermarkets, nearly one-third (280,000) were pornographic in nature. In any case, the European Parliament is insisting on the need to intervene in this area. It is calling for the harmonization of preventive and repressive legislation dealing with pornography, in order to make sure that the free movement of goods, now a reality throughout Europe, is not abused, because of Member States that authorize the distribution of pornographic material.



A final aspect of the exploitation of children which has particularly concerned Euro-MPs is the proliferation of sex tours, involving children in Third World countries. The resolution expressly calls for "the creation of a legal instrument to curb sexual violence towards children, committed by the citizens of the European Union in third countries". Some idea of the scale of the problem can be had from the fact that sex tours account for 60% of the total receipts from tourism of Thailand, and 50% of the receipts of Kenya, the Philippines and South Korea. What is more, the victims are mainly the children of poor families and street children.

One must not imagine that the European Union has been spared. It has been estimated that in Germany, for example, some 130,000 children are compelled each year by their parents or close relatives to take part in the production of pornographic materials or spectacles. The number of magazines or video cassettes featuring children in scabrous situations which leave nothing to the imagination has been put at between 10 to 20 million.

The phenomenon is aggravated by the fact that the customers for child pornography remain anonymous and cannot be studied. Studies nevertheless have shown that 21 to 23% of men are sexually stimulated by children; worse, child pornography results in many of them losing all their inhibitions and becoming sexually violent with regard to children. In West Germany alone, of the 37,592 cases of sexual abuse recorded in 1990, 12,741 related to the sexual abuse of children. As many as 98% of the suspects were men, while 75% of the victims were girls and 92% of the victims <sup>were</sup> between 6 and 14 years of age.

This probably represents only the tip of the iceberg.