

## **EDUCATION**

### ***eLearning Programme - public deliberation***

The Council adopted a common position, the German delegation voting against, concerning the proposal for a Decision on a multi-annual programme (2004-2006) for the effective integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in education and training systems in Europe (so-called *eLearning Programme*). The common position will be forwarded to the European Parliament for a second reading, in accordance with the co-decision procedure.

The Council set a budget of EUR 33 million for the common position.

The proposal aims in particular at promoting “virtual campuses”, where the objective is to support agreements between universities in order to promote students’ “virtual mobility” (e.g. joint on-line courses). It also aims to promote the “virtual twinning” of secondary schools (“e-twinning”), enabling young people to participate in a co-operation project with pupils from other countries through the Internet, while they are still at school. The updating of teachers’ and trainers’ ICT skills will also be addressed.

It is recalled that, the Council reached political agreement on the common position at its meeting on 5-6 May 2003.

For further details, please consult Press Release doc. 8430/03 on the Council’s website (<http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/>; Council; Education, Youth and Culture).

### ***Erasmus Mundus- public deliberation***

The Council adopted a common position concerning a proposal for a Decision on a multi-annual programme (2004-2008) for the enhancement of quality in higher education and the promotion of intercultural understanding through co-operation with third countries (so-called *Erasmus Mundus*). The common position will be forwarded to the European Parliament for a second reading, in accordance with the co-decision procedure.

The budget set by the Council for the common position is EUR 180 million.

The proposed programme aims to make higher education in the Union more attractive to students and teachers in third countries by means of scholarships and the setting up of around 90 inter-university networks, which will provide some 250 “European Masters Courses”. The proposal would allow for post-graduate students from third countries to receive grants at a level of circa EUR 21000 per year, an amount considered comparable to that of other international programmes, such as the U.S. Fulbright Scholarships. The proposal also provides for the mobility of European students and teachers to third countries.

It is recalled that, the Council reached political agreement on the common position at its meeting on 5-6 May 2003.

For further details, please consult Press Release doc. 8430/03 on the Council’s website (<http://ue.eu.int/newsroom/>; Council; Education, Youth and Culture).