

**Six-Monthly Report on Developments in the EU**  
**by**  
**Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism, John O'Donoghue, T.D.**

01 January 2004 – 30 June 2004

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**Period: 01 January 2004 – 30 June 2004**

**Scrutiny Review**

The Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism submitted the following proposals for scrutiny in the period 1 January 2004 – 30 June 2004:

**Arts and Culture**

Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Community action plan to promote bodies active at European level in the field of culture;

Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Decision 1419/1999/EC establishing a Community action for the "European Capital of Culture" event for the years 2005 to 2019;

Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Decision No 508/2000/EC of 14 February 2000 establishing the "Culture 2000" programme.

**Audiovisual**

Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council modifying Decision No 163/2001/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 January 2001 on the implementation of a training programme for professionals in the European audiovisual programme industry (MEDIA-Training) (2001-2005) **6118/04 (Media – Training)**;

Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council modifying Decision No 2000/821/EC of 20 December 2000 on the implementation of a programme to encourage the development, distribution and promotion of European audiovisual works (MEDIA Plus – Development, Distribution and promotion) **6119/04(Media Plus)**.

These topics were dealt with by the Audiovisual Working Group of the Council of Education, Youth and Culture.

**Previous Presidency**

**Arts and Culture**

During the Irish Presidency the Education Youth and Culture Council met in Brussels on 27-28 May 2004 to consider a number of issues relating to cultural cooperation. The Council reached political agreement on a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Decision 1419/1999/EC establishing a Community action for the "European

Capital of Culture" event for the years 2005 to 2019. This proposal provides for the nomination of two capitals of Culture from 2009 onwards, in order to allow the new Member States to participate in this action.

The extension to the Culture 2000 Programme for a further 2 years to end 2006 was adopted at the Transport and Energy Council of 8 March. The "Culture 2000" Programme, adopted by the European Parliament and the Council in February 2000 for a five-year period, was due to end on 31 December 2004. The purpose of this proposal for a Decision is to extend the programme unchanged and on a pro-rata basis for a further two years (2005-2006).

Also adopted during the Irish Presidency was a decision establishing a Community action programme to promote bodies active at European level in the field of culture. These activities must contribute, or be capable of contributing, to the development and implementation of Community cooperation policy and actions in the field of culture.

This Decision was necessitated by Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002 on the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Communities which required a basic act to be provided to cover existing support actions in the field of culture. The Decision was adopted by the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 30 March 2004.

### **Audiovisual Items**

The MEDIA Plus and MEDIA Training Programmes were adopted for a five year period, which will come to an end on 31 December 2005. The purpose of the Commission's proposals is to extend these programmes unchanged for a further year (2006). A budget of €85.6m for MEDIA Plus and a budget of €7.4m for MEDIA Training have been proposed for this extension of one year. These amounts will be added to the existing amounts of €350m for MEDIA Plus and €50m for MEDIA Training.

These items were subsequently adopted at an Agriculture Council meeting on 29 April 2004 (see OJL 157 for further details).

Further details of the above resolutions and conclusions can be found on the European Union website: [http://www.europa.eu.int/pol/cult/index\\_en.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/pol/cult/index_en.htm)

### **Presidency Events**

A number of events were held in Ireland to advance the cultural cooperation agenda in the context of the Irish Presidency. These included:

*Seminar on Promotion of Linguistic Diversity through Literature:* This Seminar took place in Killarney on 11<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2004 and considered the threats and constraints facing literature, current actions in the field by the EU and possible future actions.

*Creative Financing and Music:* This Seminar took place in Dublin on 20<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> April, 2004 and focused on investment and financing strategies for the music sector in general and small music enterprises in particular.

*Networking for the Arts in Europe:* The Seminar was held in Cork from 20<sup>th</sup> to 22<sup>nd</sup> May and aimed to facilitate greater networking among NGOs in the arts field.

*EU National Representatives Group Meeting (NRG):* The sixth meeting of the NRG was held on Monday 28 June. The National Representatives Group (NRG) is a group of experts nominated by each Member State to coordinate digitisation policies and programmes across Europe. The NRG comprises officially nominated experts from each member state. This was the first meeting that representatives from the new Member States were in attendance. Also in attendance were representatives from the European Commission, the Council of Europe, Norway, Russia and Israel.

*International Digitisation Conference:* An international digitisation conference “Access all areas: serving the user” was held in Dublin on Tuesday 29 June. The focus was on portals to cultural heritage and making culture accessible to everyone. Significant initiatives undertaken in Canada, the UK and Ireland were presented including the Irish cultural portal <http://www.askaboutireland.ie/>.

## **Sports**

The Irish Presidency hosted the highly successful pan-European launch of the European Year of Education through Sport 2004 in Croke Park on 29/30 January. A meeting of Troika Sports Ministers as well as a joint meeting of Sport and Education Ministers were held at the same time. Matters addressed included the need to promote the educational and social values of sport; developing a better partnership between the worlds of school and sport; sport as an instrument in improving multicultural dialogue and in promoting peace; the key role of sport in the area of cardiovascular health and combating obesity, especially among children, was stressed.

A major concern for the EU Sports Ministers was to agree an appropriate text on sport for inclusion in the new EU constitution thus providing, for the first time ever, a formal competence for EU actions in the area of sport. In this context, the Irish Presidency concluded that it was now opportune for EU Sports Ministers to consider a more structured approach to dealing with issues of mutual interest and it invited the Commission to initiate consultations with member states to identify topics of common interest and to agree a coherent, structured work programme which would constitute a rolling agenda for meetings of EU Sports Ministers over upcoming Presidencies. The Commission's consultative process is now well underway and should enable substantial progress to be made in achieving agreement on a new programme of work in the area of sport, particularly in view of the inclusion of the first ever provision for sport in the draft Constitution for Europe.

Further details on European Year of Education through Sport can be found on the following website: <a href="http://www.eyes-2004.info/254.0.html">http://www.eyes-2004.info/254.0.html</a>
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## **Tourism**

In the face of the common challenges facing the tourism sector across Europe, the Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism requested Fáilte Ireland to organise a major international conference on tourism as the centrepiece of Ireland's tourism programme for the Presidency. The event, entitled "Charting Tourism Success" was held in Dublin Castle on 5 April and was attended by policy makers and industry practitioners across Europe. A diverse panel of distinguished speakers provided valuable insights and set out some fresh ideas on how to meet the challenges facing the sector.

Another significant development during the Irish Presidency was the inclusion of Article III-181a in the new draft Constitution which accords a legal competence to the EU for supporting, complementary and coordinating action in the field of tourism. Union action shall be aimed at encouraging the creation of a favourable environment for the development of undertakings in this sector and promoting cooperation between the Member States, particularly by the exchange of good practice.

Further details of the above resolutions and conclusions can be found on the European Union website: <a href="http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/services/tourism/index_en.htm">http://europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/services/tourism/index_en.htm</a>
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