

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

01 July 2004 – 31 December 2004

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**Period: 01 July 2004 – 31 December 2004**

**Scrutiny Review**

The Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism submitted the following proposals for scrutiny in the period 01 July 2004 – 31 December 2004:

**Arts and Culture**

- Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Culture 2007 programme (2007-2013), a multi-annual programme of support for Community measures in the field of culture.

This proposal is being dealt with by The Cultural Affairs Working Group of the Education, Youth and Culture Council.

**Audiovisual**

-Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the implementation of a programme of support for the European audiovisual sector (MEDIA 2007).

-Proposal concerning the **signature** of an Agreement between the Community and the Swiss Confederation in the audiovisual field, establishing the terms and conditions for the participation of the Swiss Confederation in the Community programmes MEDIA Plus and MEDIA Training, and a Final Act. . (Proposal should be read in conjunction with COM (2004)649, which deals with the approval of the **conclusion** of the Agreement).

(This proposal was adopted by the Council of Ministers on 25/10/04).

-Proposal concerning the **conclusion** of an Agreement between the Community and the Swiss Confederation in the Audiovisual field, establishing the terms and conditions for the participation of the Swiss Confederation in the MEDIA Plus and MEDIA Training Community programmes, and a final Act. (Proposal should be read in conjunction with COM(2004)646, which deals with the approval for the **signature** of the Agreement).

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

### **Previous Presidency**

During the Dutch Presidency the Education Youth and Culture Council met in Brussels on 15-16 November 2004 to consider a number of issues relating to cultural cooperation and audiovisual matters.

#### **Arts and Culture Items**

The Council of Ministers :-

- exchanged initial views on the Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Culture 2007 programme (2007-2013), the proposed third generation programme for Community support in the field of culture.
- adopted a new Work Plan for Culture which gives a framework structure to Council's work and focuses on five priorities to be achieved and implemented in the years 2005 and 2006 in a continuous and sustained manner by the Presidencies concerned
- adopted a decision authorising the Commission to participate, on behalf of the Community, in the negotiations within UNESCO on the convention on the protection of the diversity of cultural contents and artistic expressions.

#### **Audiovisual Items**

The Council of Ministers held a short exchange of views regarding:-

-a Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the implementation of a programme of support for the European audiovisual sector (MEDIA 2007). This proposal aims to continue the current MEDIA and MEDIA Training programmes which are set to finish at end 2006, by providing financial aid towards development, distribution, training and promotion of audiovisual works within the EU.

The Council also noted that discussions were continuing regarding:-

-a Proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on film heritage and the competitiveness of related industrial activities.

In the period under review, approval was also given for an agreement between the Swiss Confederation and the EU whereby Switzerland will now participate in the current MEDIA Plus and MEDIA Training programmes.

Further details of the above resolutions and conclusions can be found on the European Union website: <a href="http://www.europa.eu.int/pol/cult/index_en.htm">www.europa.eu.int/pol/cult/index_en.htm</a>
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## Presidency Events

*EU National Representatives Group Meeting (NRG)*: The seventh meeting of the NRG was held on 17 September. 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. The main conclusions were as follows:

- A draft action plan for future coordination actions (2006 et sq) will be prepared by the Netherlands, Luxembourg and United Kingdom EU presidencies in close cooperation with the Taskforce, before the next NRG meeting in June 2005. The final action plan is to be decreed by a Council resolution under the UK EU Presidency.
- *Parallel*, a proposal for nomination (or reconfirmation of that nomination) of the NRG members with new Terms of Reference, to reinforce the mandate of the future NRG, will be prepared before and discussed in the next NRG meeting.
- If advisable, the NRG will be consulted on both items in an interim meeting early 2005 to be organised by the Luxembourg EU Presidency.
- The digitisation-specific work programme/Lund-update together with the renewed NRG structure will be put as a request through the Council by December 2005, to reinforce the mandate of NRG in its new context and to kick off the new action plan.

On the policy side, a Council Resolution in October provided for the continuation of the NRG. In relation to a cultural portal, it has been agreed by the main National Cultural Institutions and other relevant bodies that an Irish cultural portal should be established. The portal will be called *www.culturenet.ie* and will facilitate Ireland in cooperating with the development of a European cultural portal.

## Sports

The Dutch Presidency hosted the Closing Ceremony of the European Year of Education through Sport (EYES) in The Hague in December. A meeting of Troika Sports Ministers as well as an informal EU Sports Ministers Conference also took place at the same time. Matters addressed included the need to continue addressing issues related to the educational and social values of sport at EU policy level in order to ensure a lasting legacy of the EYES 2004.

The Dutch Presidency made substantial progress in achieving agreement on a new programme of work in the area of sport. This new approach, developed under the Irish Presidency, has received unanimous endorsement from the member states.

Member states were also represented on the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and work proceeded on the preparation and agreement on a new world anti-doping convention under the aegis of UNESCO.

## **Tourism**

During the Dutch Presidency, a European Tourism Forum, with representation from the European industry and policy-makers, was held in Budapest on 15-16 October. The Forum considered various issues relevant to tourism development and sustainability in a European Union context, including employment and training in the tourism industry and new trends in tourism.