2503rd Council meeting

- EDUCATION, YOUTH AND CULTURE -

Brussels, 5 and 6 May 2003

Presidents:

Mr Petros EFTHYMIOU, Minister for Education and Religious Affairs

Ms Eleni KOURKOULA, State Secretary for Education and Religious Affairs

Mr Evangelos VENIZELOS, Minister for Culture

Mr Christos PROTOPAPPAS, Minister for the Press and the Mass Media

of the Hellenic Republic
CONTENTS

PARTICIPANTS........................................................................................................................................ 4

ITEMS DEBATED

EDUCATION ........................................................................................................................................ 6
EUROPEAN BENCHMARKS IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING - Conclusions................................. 6
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUPILS AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING - Resolution................................................................. 10
eLEARNING PROGRAMME - Public deliberation.................................................................................. 13
ERASMUS MUNDUS - Public deliberation.............................................................................................. 14
THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN THE "EUROPE OF KNOWLEDGE" ............................................ 15

YOUTH ................................................................................................................................................. 16
THE FUTURE OF YOUTH IN THE EUROPEAN UNION.............................................................. 16
"THE SOCIAL VALUE OF SPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE" - Declaration......................................... 17

CULTURE ............................................................................................................................................ 19
DECLARATION ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF IRAQ................... 19
HORIZONTAL ASPECTS OF CULTURE - Resolution ..................................................................... 20
ACCESSIBILITY OF CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES - Resolution ................................................................. 22
EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE ............................................................................................... 24
– APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE SELECTION PANEL.................................................. 24
– DESIGNATION OF THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE FOR 2006................................. 24
EXTENSION OF THE CULTURE 2000 PROGRAMME ..................................................................... 25
TELEVISION WITHOUT FRONTIERS - WORK PROGRAMME 2003.............................................. 26
EXTENSION OF THE MEDIA PROGRAMMES TO 2006................................................................. 28

1 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://ue.eu.int.

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 above mentioned Council Internet site or may be obtained from the Press Office.
OTHER BUSINESS......................................................................................................................... 29
– VAT ON AUDIO RECORDS AND CASSETTES ................................................................. 29
– ASEM CONFERENCE ON CULTURES AND CIVILISATION FOR MINISTERS
  FOR CULTURE - Beijing, 10-11 June 2003 ......................................................................... 29
– SAVING IRAQ'S CULTURAL HERITAGE ........................................................................... 29
EVENTS IN THE MARGIN OF THE COUNCIL ................................................................. 30
– INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS OVER LUNCH.......................................................................... 30

ITEMS APPROVED WITHOUT DEBATE

CULTURE
– Resolution on Archives on the Member States........................................................................I

YOUTH
– The future of youth activities in the context of the new generation of programmes - Conclusions ..................II

FISHERIES
– Kiribati fishing zone..............................................................................................................V

INTERNAL MARKET
– Annual and consolidated accounts * - Public deliberation..................................................V

EXTERNAL RELATIONS
– Switzerland – Free movement of persons – Economic and social cohesion .......................V

TRADE POLICY
– Antidumping – Hot-rolled steel coils, tube and pipe fittings .............................................VI

APPOINTMENTS
– Committee of the Regions..................................................................................................VI
PARTICIPANTS

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

**Belgium :**
Ms Françoise DUPUIS
Mr Paul VAN GREMBERGEN
Minister for Higher Education, Further Education and Scientific Research (French Community)
Flemish Minister for Home Affairs, Culture, Youth and the Civil Service

**Denmark :**
Mr Henrik NEPPER-CHRISTENSEN
State Secretary for Education

**Germany :**
Ms Christina WEISS
Mr Uwe THOMAS
Ms Marieluise BECK
Minister of State to the Federal Chancellor, Federal Government Representative for Culture and Media
State Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education and Research
Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

**Greece :**
Mr Petros EFTHYMIOU
Mr Evangelos VENIZELOS
Mr Christos PROTOPAPPAS
Ms Eleni KOURKOULA
Minister for Education and Religious Affairs
Minister for Culture
Minister for the Press and the Mass Media
State Secretary for Education and Religious Affairs

**Spain :**
Ms Pilar DEL CASTILLO VERA
Minister for Education, Culture and Sport

**France :**
Mr Jean-Jacques AILLAGON
Mr Xavier DARCOS
Minister for Culture and Communication
Minister attached to the Minister for Youth, Education and Research, with responsibility for School Education

**Ireland :**
Ms Síle de VALERA
Minister of State at the Department of Education and Science
(with special responsibility for Adult Education, Youth Affairs and Educational Disadvantage)

**Italy :**
Ms Letizia MORATTI
Ms Grazia SESTINI
Mr Mario PESCANTE
Mr Giancarlo INNOCENZI
Minister for Education
State Secretary for Labour and Social Policy
State Secretary for Cultural Assets and Activities
State Secretary for Communications

**Luxembourg :**
Ms Anne BRASSEUR
Mr François BILTGEN
Minister for Education, Vocational Training and Sport
Minister for Labour and Employment, Minister for Relations with Parliament, Minister for Religious Affairs, Minister with responsibility for Communications

**Netherlands :**
Ms Maria van der HOEVEN
Mr Cees van LEEUWEN
Minister for Education, Cultural Affairs and Science
State Secretary for Education, Cultural Affairs and Science (Culture and the Media)

**Austria :**
Ms Elisabeth GEHRER
Mr Franz MORAK
Federal Minister for Education, Science and Culture
State Secretary, Federal Chancellery
Portugal:  
Mr David JUSTINO Minister for Education  
Mr Pedro LYNCE de FARIA Minister for Science and Higher Education  
Mr Pedro ROSETA Minister for Culture  

Finland:  
Ms Tuula HAATAINEN Minister for Education  
Ms Tanja KARPELA Minister for Culture  

Sweden:  
Ms Marita ULVSKOG Minister for Culture  
Ms Lena HALLENGREN Minister at the Ministry of Education  
Mr Carl LINDBERG State Secretary for Education  

United Kingdom:  
Ms Margaret HODGE Minister of State for Lifelong Learning and Higher Education  

* * *  
Commission:  
Mr Philippe BUSQUIN Member  
Ms Viviane REDING Member  

The Governments of the Acceding States were represented as follows 2:  

Czech Republic:  
Ms Petra BUKZOVÁ Minister for Education, Youth and Sport  
Ms Petra SMOLIKOVÁ Deputy Minister for Culture  

Estonia:  
Mr Margus RAHUOJA Deputy Head of Mission  

Cyprus:  
Mr Pefkios GEORGIADES Minister for Education and Culture  

Latvia:  
Mr Karlis SADURSKIS Minister for Education and Science  
Mr Daniels PAVLUTS State Secretary, Ministry of Culture  

Lithuania:  
Mr Algirdas MONKEVICIUS Minister for Education and Science  
Ms Roma DOVYDENIENE Minister for Culture  

Hungary:  
Mr Bálint MAGYAR Minister for Education  

Malta:  
Mr Louis GALEA Minister for Education  

Poland:  
Mr Tomasz GOBAN-KLAS State Secretary, Ministry of National Education and Sport  

Slovakia:  
Mr Martin FRONC Minister for Education  
Mr Rudolf CHMEL Minister for Culture  

Slovenia:  
Mr Slavko GABER Minister for Education, Science and Sport  
Ms Andreja RIHTER Minister for Culture  

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2 This was the first Council meeting where the ten Acceding States took part with the status of active observers.
ITEMS DEBATED

EDUCATION

EUROPEAN BENCHMARKS IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING - Conclusions

"THE COUNCIL,

Having regard to:

1. The Lisbon European Council's affirmation that Europe's education and training systems need to adapt both to the demands of the knowledge society and to the need for an improved level and quality of employment.

2. The mandate from the Lisbon European Council to the Education Council "to undertake a general reflection on concrete future objectives of education systems, focusing on common concerns and priorities while respecting national diversity with a view to contributing to the Luxembourg and Cardiff processes, and presenting a broader report to the European Council in the Spring of 2001" (Presidency Conclusions, No 27).

3. The Report on the concrete future objectives of the education and training systems, which included 3 concrete strategic objectives together with 13 associated objectives, and the detailed work programme, which was endorsed by the Barcelona European Council of 15-16 March 2002.

4. The European Council of 20 and 21 March 2003 which called for “using benchmarks to identify best practice and to ensure efficient and effective investment in human resources”.

5. The Open Method of Co-ordination, which is described in the conclusions of the Lisbon European Council as a “means of spreading best practice and achieving greater convergence towards the main EU goals”. The Open Method of Co-ordination is implemented through the use of tools such as indicators and benchmarks as well as the exchange of experiences peer reviews and the dissemination of good practice.


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4 “Detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe” jointly adopted by the Council and Commission on 14 February 2002.
REAFFIRMS

That the report to be submitted to the Spring European Summit in 2004 should:

– Emphasise the need for a concerted and continuous effort in following up on the Lisbon goals of making Europe the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world.

– Recognise the central role of indicators and reference levels in giving directions and measuring progress towards the thirteen objectives in the objective report.

– Propose a first list of indicators and reference levels of European average performance to be applied for monitoring the progress in the field of education and training towards the Lisbon goals.

STRESSES

In the context of the Lisbon Strategy, the Council has agreed to establish a series of reference levels of European average performance, while taking into account the starting point of the individual Member States, which will be used as one of the tools for monitoring the implementation of the “Detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems”.

Reference levels of European\(^5\) average performance:

- should be based on data that are comparable.

- do not define national targets.

- do not prescribe decisions to be taken by national governments, however national actions based on national priorities will contribute to their achievement.

Early school leavers

A minimum knowledge base is required in order to take part in today’s knowledge based society. Those without qualifications are consequently less likely to participate effectively in lifelong learning and are in danger of being left by the wayside in today’s increasingly competitive societies. Hence, diminishing the percentage of early school leavers is essential to ensure full employment and greater social cohesion.

– Therefore, by 2010, an EU average rate of no more than 10% early school leavers\(^6\) should be achieved.

\(^5\) Based on EU and acceding countries.

\(^6\) Share of the population aged 18-24 with only lower secondary education or less and not in education or training (structural indicator) – Source Eurostat; Labour Force Survey.
Mathematics, science and technology

The European Union needs an adequate output of scientific specialists in order to become the most dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in the world. The need for more scientific specialists is underlined by the conclusions of the Barcelona European Council (2002) “that overall spending on R&D and innovation in the Union should be increased with the aim of approaching 3% of GDP by 2010”.

Gender balance is an especially important challenge in this area. Relatively fewer women than men choose to pursue degrees in mathematics, science and technology and even fewer women choose careers in research.

— Therefore, the total number of graduates in mathematics, science and technology in the European Union should increase by at least 15% by 2010 while at the same time the level of gender imbalance should decrease.

Completion of upper secondary education

Completing upper secondary education is increasingly important not just for successful entry into the labour market, but also to allow students access to the learning and training opportunities offered by higher education. Successful participation in the knowledge-based society requires the basic building blocks offered by a secondary education.

— Therefore, by 2010, at least 85% of 22 year olds in the European Union should have completed upper secondary education.

Basic skills

All individuals need a core package of knowledge, skills and attitudes for employment, inclusion, subsequent learning as well as personal fulfilment and development.

— Therefore, by 2010, the percentage of low-achieving 15 years old in reading literacy in the European Union should have decreased by at least 20% compared to the year 2000.

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7 Total number of tertiary (ISCED levels 5&6) graduates from the Mathematics, Science and Technology fields – source joint UNESCO/OECD/Eurostat questionnaire.
8 Percentage of those aged 22 who have successfully completed at least upper secondary education (ISCED 3) – Source Eurostat Labour Force Survey.
9 Reading literacy proficiency “level 1” and lower - Source PISA (OECD 2000).
Lifelong learning

In a knowledge society individuals must update and complement their knowledge, competencies and skills throughout life to maximise their personal development and to maintain and improve their position in the labour market.

Therefore, by 2010, the European Union average level of participation in Lifelong Learning, should be at least 12.5% of the adult working age population (25-64 age group).

Investment in human resources

Investment in education is one with long-term returns and indirect as well as direct benefits, and most governments consider it to impact positively on several key political challenges such as social cohesion, international competition, and sustainable growth.

The Lisbon European Summit called for a “substantial annual increase in the per capita investment in human resources”. In the Communication “Investing efficiently in education and training: an imperative for Europe", the European Commission proposes a number of issues of relevance for the efficient investment in education and training that should be analysed in detail. The Council is looking forward to the outcome of ongoing work before deciding on further action.”

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10 Percentage of population aged 25-64 participating in education and training in 4 weeks prior to the survey –Source Eurostat; Labour Force Survey. A Eurostat taskforce is currently undertaking work on a new Adult Education Survey that would yield a better measure of participation.
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR PUPILS AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES IN
EDUCATION AND TRAINING - Resolution

"THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1. STRESSING that in the European Union a significant number of people with disabilities face
difficulties of different kinds in their daily life;

2. NOTING that the Treaty establishing the European Community gives the Community the
opportunity to take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic
origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation, while fully respecting the
responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organisation of education
systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity;

3. RECALLING the Council Decision of 3 December 2001 on the European Year of People with
Disabilities 2003\(^1\),

4. RECALLING also
– the Resolution of the Council and the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council of
31 May 1990 concerning integration of children and young people with disabilities in
ordinary systems of education\(^2\),
– the Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member
States meeting within the Council of 20 December 1996 on equality of opportunity for
people with disabilities\(^3\),
– the communication from the European Commission in 2000 - "Towards a barrier-free
Europe for people with disabilities"\(^4\),
– the European Parliament Resolution of 4 April 2001 on the Communication from the
Commission "Towards a barrier-free Europe for People with disabilities"\(^5\),
– the Detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of Education and training
systems in Europe and in particular objective 2.3 on supporting active citizenship and social
cohesion\(^6\),
– the Council Resolution of 6 February 2003 "eAccessibility - improving the access of people
with disabilities to the knowledge based society"\(^7\),

\(^2\) O.J. C 162 of 03.07.1990.
\(^3\) O.J. C 012 of 13.01.1997.
\(^6\) O.J. C 142 of 14.06.2002.
\(^7\) O.J. C 39 of 18.02.2003.
5. NOTING that the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20 December 1993, specifically refers in its rule 6 that "States recognise the principle of equal primary, secondary and tertiary educational opportunities for children, youth and adults with disabilities, in integrated settings" and that "special attention should be given in the areas of very young and pre-school children, and adults with disabilities, particularly women."

6. NOTING the increased involvement of Governments, support groups, teachers and parents groups, and in particular organisations of persons with disabilities and their families in seeking to improve access to education for those with special needs;

7. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the initiatives in Member States and at Community level to ensure that people with disabilities have better access to education and training in a life long learning perspective;

8. NOTING, however, the need for further, appropriate practicable measures to improve access of persons with disabilities to education and training;

INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION, WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE COMPETENCIES, TO:

i) encourage and support the full integration of children and young people with special needs in society through their appropriate education and training, and their insertion in a school system which is adapted to their needs;

ii) pursue efforts to make lifelong learning more accessible to people with disabilities and, within this context, give particular attention to the use of new multimedia technologies and the Internet to improve the quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and services as well as remote exchanges and collaboration (e-learning);

iii) encourage the accessibility of all public websites covering guidance, education and vocational training to persons with disabilities by respecting the web accessibilities guidelines;

iv) increase, where appropriate, adequate support of services and technical assistance to pupils and students with special education and training needs;

v) facilitate further proper information and guidance in order to allow disabled people themselves or, if necessary, their parents or other responsible persons involved in choosing the appropriate type of education;
vi) continue and, if necessary, increase the efforts aiming at the initial and in-service training of teachers in the area of special needs, with a view, in particular, to the provision of appropriate pedagogical techniques and materials;

vii) promote European co-operation between the relevant actors professionally involved in the education and training of children and young people with disabilities, in order to improve the integration of pupils and students with special needs in ordinary or specialised establishments;

viii) enhance sharing information and experiences on these matters at European level, involving, as appropriate, the European organisations and networks with relevant experience in this field such as the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education;

ix) provide, where appropriate, facilities, training opportunities and resources regarding the transition from school to employment."
**eLEARNING PROGRAMME - Public deliberation**

The Council reached a political agreement on a common position 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. Once formally adopted at a forthcoming Council session, the common position will be forwarded to the European Parliament for a second reading.

All delegations expressed their support for the programme’s goals. The Council set a budget of EUR 33 million for the common position, subject to the Commission’s confirmation of its acceptance of this figure. However, the German delegation was unable to join this agreement.

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.

A further aim is to combat digital illiteracy (the inability to use ICT, such as the Internet), where the idea is the development of digital literacy training methods, especially for European citizens who have problems to access traditional education and training.

The Commission’s proposal, which was presented in December 2002, seeks to complement activities within the existing programmes and is expected to provide good experience to be taken into account in the successors of the SOCRATES and LEONARDO programmes.

The background to this proposal is the Commission’s “eLearning Action Plan” (presented to the Education and Youth Council in May 2001) as well as the successive calls by European Councils (Lisbon, Stockholm and Barcelona) for sustained action at Member State and Community levels to integrate ICT in education and training systems.
ERASMUS MUNDUS - Public deliberation

The Council reached a political agreement on 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. The Council agreed to change its name from “Erasmus World” to “Erasmus Mundus”. Once formally adopted at a forthcoming Council session, the common position will be forwarded to the European Parliament for a second reading.

All delegations expressed their strong support for the programme’s goals and recognised its importance in contributing to achieving the objectives set by the Lisbon European Council (March 2000) to make Europe “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world” by 2010. The budget proposed by the Council for the common position is EUR 180 million. In this connection, the Council agreed to the inclusion of a review clause in view of the Union’s next financial perspectives starting in 2007.

The Council also agreed to include the adoption of selection results of “Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses” in the management procedure applicable to the measures necessary for the programme’s implementation.

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.
THE ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN THE "EUROPE OF KNOWLEDGE"

The Council held an exchange of views on the role of universities in the “Europe of knowledge” on the basis of a questionnaire prepared by the Presidency.

The majority of delegations stressed the importance of quality assurance systems in higher education, the continuation of the implementation of the “Bologna process” in this area, as well as the importance of promoting accreditation and recognition of diplomas at European level. Networking among universities was also considered as an important contribution to the development of excellence, namely via the exchange and dissemination of good practice.

Some Member States referred to the critical role played by private investment, particularly in the area of research, as well as to the benefits of curricular specialisation and the promotion of higher education “centres of excellence”.

Delegations from the Acceding States also took the floor during the debate to concur with the issues raised by Member States.

The Council’s exchange of views took into account many of the observations in the Commission’s Communication “The role of universities in the Europe of knowledge” (February 2003). Furthermore, the discussion was seen as being closely linked to the aims of the “Erasmus Mundus” programme (see above).
YOUTH

THE FUTURE OF YOUTH IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

The Council held an exchange of views on the future of youth activities in the Union, on the basis of a questionnaire prepared by the Presidency.

All delegations expressed positive views on the importance of giving priority to youth information and participation. Delegations were overwhelmingly favourable to the maintenance of a separate programme specifically targeting young people and youth activities, in view of the success of the current Youth programme and the positive feedback received at national level from a number of different actors involved in this field.

Many delegations welcomed the effective and flexible use of the “Open Method of Co-ordination” in this policy field as an appropriate instrument to exchange good practice and promote the sharing of successful experiences among Member States. They also underscored the importance of keeping future objectives concise and focused.

The discussion took into account the Commission’s White Paper “A New Impetus for European Youth” (November 2001), the “European Framework of Co-operation in the Youth Field” established by a Council Resolution in June 2002, as well as the recent Commission’s Communication (April 2003) on the follow-up to the White Paper which proposes common objectives for the participation and information of young people.

Furthermore, the discussion was closely linked to the Conclusions on the future of youth activities in the context of the new generation of programmes, which were adopted by the Council on 6 May under the list of “A items” (i.e. items adopted without discussion; see page II for the text of the Conclusions).
"THE SOCIAL VALUE OF SPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE" - Declaration

"THE COUNCIL AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL:

1. STRESSING the social and health significance of sport for young people, both male and female, and its role in forging identity and bringing people together as affirmed in the declaration on the social importance of sport annexed to the Treaty of Amsterdam,

2. RECALLING that the Declaration on the Specific Characteristics of Sport and its Social Function in Europe, annexed to the Presidency conclusions of the Nice European Council meeting (7, 8 and 9 December 2000), requests "the Community institutions and the Member States to continue examining their policies, in compliance with the Treaty and in accordance with their respective powers, in the light of these general principles",

3. RECALLING the Resolution of the Council and of the Ministers for Youth meeting within the Council of 17 December 1999 on the non-formal education dimension of sporting activities in the European Community Youth Programmes,\(^\text{18}\)

4. STRESSING also that the development of physical, intellectual and social powers through physical education and sport should be encouraged for everyone, both within the educational system and in other aspects of social life,

5. RECOGNISING that focusing on the economic dimension of sport in Europe risks weakening its educational, social and health function for young people,

6. NOTING with satisfaction that the year 2003 has been declared “European year of people with disabilities”,

STRESSING the importance of the decision establishing the European Year of Education through Sport 2004,

1. EMPHASISE the need to dissemination the values of sport: promotion of physical and mental well-being, and improvement of quality of life,

2. STRESS that it is possible to make the educational systems more attractive by using sport as an educational instrument to improve the involvement of young people both in formal education and non-formal learning,

3. HIGHLIGHT the importance of promoting the values and virtues of self-discipline, self-esteem and hard effort fostered by sport, thus helping young people to identify their skills and limitations and to overcome the difficulties they may face in their everyday life, and as a result permitting them to achieve their objectives and to gain their autonomy,

\(^\text{18}\) OJ C 8 of 12.1.2000
4. POINT OUT that through the values of solidarity, respect for others, participation and fair play, sport contributes to the socialisation of young people, fosters their participation in public life, and promotes democratic values and citizenship among the young,

5. STRESS the role which can be played by sport for social cohesion, especially among disadvantaged young people,

6. STRESS that by promoting tolerance, acceptance and respect for diversity towards other young athletes, sport may make an important contribution to intercultural understanding, and combating racism, xenophobia, sexism and other forms of discrimination,

7. STRESS moreover the need to ensure that these values are respected by all involved in sports and that measures aimed at young people in favour of fair play and against threats to their health, in particular doping, as well as violence in sport, should be encouraged,

8. UNDERLINE that sport can improve the quality of life and foster the independence of young people with disabilities. It can help them overcome social prejudices, and STRESS the need to remove barriers that prevent young people with disabilities from having access to sporting activities,

9. CONSIDERS that it is essential to safeguard the specific characteristics of sport and to promote its ethical values and Olympic ideals, and thereby avoid possible risks through excessive development of the economic dimension of sport,

10. CONSIDERS also that voluntary activities in sport should be fostered, with the participation and active contribution of all bodies concerned, especially of the volunteer youth sports associations and organisations."
CULTURE

DECLARATION ON THE DESTRUCTION OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF IRAQ

The Council agreed unanimously on a Declaration (see below) on the tragic destruction of cultural goods, archaeological sites, monuments and libraries in Iraq, on the basis of a proposal made by the Presidency and following a statement made by the Swedish delegation asking Member States to formally express their concern about the situation, as well as their support for the work being currently undertaken by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) in response to these events. The Declaration must be formally adopted at a forthcoming Council meeting before publication in the Official Journal of the Communities for information.

Several delegations took the opportunity to convey their deep apprehension in view of the vandalism and looting that had taken place in recent weeks. The UK delegation informed the Council of some of the measures taken by the UK Ministry of Defence throughout the conflict in order to protect sensitive cultural and archaeological sites in Iraq and of their current work to ensure that such sites are secured from the risk of looting.

“The Council of the European Union

- expresses its deepest concern at the tragic destruction of cultural goods, archaeological sites, and monuments of irreplaceable historical value in Iraq, and the vandalism and looting of the museums and libraries of vital importance not only to Iraq but to the whole world.

- confirms that a basic principle ruling the EU as a community of cultural values and sensitivities is the respect and protection of world cultural heritage,

- stresses the need to protect in an efficient way the cultural goods of Iraq and to return the objects illegally removed from museums or archaeological sites, without allowing them to become objects of trade ending up in foreign museums or private collections.

The Council declares the European Union's active support of UNESCO's related initiatives and actions as well as its support of governmental and non-governmental organisations aiming at protecting Iraq's cultural heritage as part of the world's cultural heritage.”
HORIZONTAL ASPECTS OF CULTURE - Resolution

"THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

1. NOTING that, in accordance with the Treaty establishing the European Community, the
   Community shall take cultural aspects into account in its action under other provisions of this
   Treaty, in particular in order to respect and to promote the diversity of its cultures;

2. RECALLING the resolution of the Council of 20 January 1997 on horizontal aspects of
   culture that includes several proposals on how to integrate cultural aspects into Community
   action;

3. RECALLING that the resolution of the Council of 21 January 2002 on the role of culture in
   the development of the European Union stressed the need for synergies and complementarity
   between culture and the various Community actions;

4. RECALLING that the Council on 25 June 2002 adopted a Resolution on a work plan for the
   European co-operation in the field of culture, and that this work plan includes as priorities
   horizontal aspects of cultural action (synergies with other Community areas and activities,
   economic and social dimension of culture, mobility of persons and circulation of works, as well
   as development of the cultural and creative industries);

5. RECALLING that the follow-up concerning horizontal aspects of the work plan has already
   started and that on 19 December 2002 the Council adopted a resolution implementing the work
   plan on European co-operation in the field of culture: European added value and mobility of
   persons and circulation of works in the cultural sector;

6. NOTING that culture interacts with other sectors both in the Member States and at the European
   level;

7. RE-EMPHASISES the importance of an effective synergy with all, both internal and external,
   other relevant areas and actions of the Community;

8. STRESSES that culture is a powerful vector of integration and of social inclusion;

9. RECOGNISES the work already initiated in the Member States and by the European
    Commission and STRESSES that an extra effort needs to be made to include culture in other
    sectors with the aim of placing culture at the heart of European integration;

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19 OJ C 36 of 5.2.1997
20 OJ C 32 of 5.2.2002
21 OJ C 162 of 6.7.2002
22 OJ C 13 of 18.1.2003

8430/03 (Presse 114)
10. INVITES the Commission, subject to timely information from all Member States, to submit by the end of 2003 a communication on the cultural dimension of EU Structural Funds for the period 1994-1999, while awaiting with interest the third Commission report on economic and social cohesion as well as the mid term evaluation of the Structural Funds;

11. LOOKS forward to a reflection, in 2004, to be led by the Commission on the basis of the above-mentioned elements, which will consider how the contribution of culture to economic and social cohesion could be reinforced;

12. INVITES the Member States and the Commission within their respective competencies and responsibilities,

   – to enhance synergies with Community areas and activities other than cultural ones, from the earliest possible stage of preparation of any action or policy, to its implementation, through an assessment of these actions at all appropriate levels;

   – to examine the methods through which the exchange of good practices in relation to the economic and social dimension of culture could be developed, including the contribution of cultural activities to social inclusion and to the promotion of cultural diversity;

13. AGREES that the Council, by the end of 2004, should take stock of the follow up to this resolution."
ACCESSIBILITY OF CULTURAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND CULTURAL ACTIVITIES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES - Resolution

"THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1. NOTING that the Treaty establishing the European Community gives the Community the opportunity to take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation,


3. RECALLING also
   - the Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council of 20 December 1996 on equality of opportunity for people with disabilities 24,
   - the communication from the European Commission in 2000 - "Towards a barrier-free Europe for people with disabilities" 25,
   - the Council Resolution of 6 February 2003 on eAccessibility - improving the access of people with disabilities to the Knowledge based Society 26.

4. STRESSING that in the European Union there is a significant number of people with disabilities who face physical, social and information barriers to their cultural and artistic expression and accordingly their access to the cultural heritage and artistic creation is restricted,

5. NOTING that the United Nations Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 20 December 1993, specifically refers in its rule 10 to the responsibilities of States in ensuring that "persons with disabilities are integrated into and can participate in cultural activities on equal basis", and especially to their responsibilities in promoting "the accessibility to and availability of places for cultural performances and services, such as theatres, museums, cinemas and libraries" and in initiating "the development and use of technical arrangements to make literature, films and theatre accessible" to persons with disabilities,

6. NOTING the initiatives in Member States and at Community level to ensure that people with disabilities have better access to culture,

7. NOTING, however, the need for further, appropriate practicable measures to improve access of persons with disabilities to cultural infrastructure and cultural activities and to the media,

24 OJ C 12 of 13.01.1997
25 doc. 8557/00, COM(2000) 284 final
26 OJ C 39 of 18.02.2003
INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION, WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE COMPETENCIES, TO:

i) examine ways to integrate people with disabilities into the arts and cultural sectors and to support equality of opportunity in the production and promotion of their work,

ii) encourage the culture sector, to contribute to promoting a positive image of people with disabilities,

iii) continue efforts to eliminate existing barriers and examine further appropriate ways and means to facilitate and improve the access of people with disabilities to culture, including

   • evaluating and improving physical access, without prejudice to Member States regulations concerning protection of monuments, to places such as archaeological sites, museums, monuments and places of cultural activities, as well as assuring physical access to buildings that will be constructed in the future,

   • providing information via modern information technology,

   • enhancing access to cultural activities through e.g. subtitled performances, use of easy-to-read and sign language, guides and catalogues in Braille, use of contrasts of light in exhibitions,

iv) encourage the improvement of accessibility by using appropriate signage, for example by different logos,

v) enhance sharing information and experiences on these matters at the European level, involving, as appropriate, the European organisations and networks with relevant experience in this field.

AGREES that the Council, by the end of 2005, should take stock of the follow-up of the measures to implement the present Resolution."
EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE

- **APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS OF THE SELECTION PANEL**

The Council took note of the nomination of two members for the selection panel of the European Capital of Culture Community action. The two applications were submitted, respectively, by the Greek and the Italian delegations.

The Greek delegation nominated Mr Panos THEODORIDES, currently Director of the “Cultural Olympiads Realisation Programme” in the Organisation for the Promotion of Hellenic Culture, and the Italian delegation nominated Mr Claudio STRINATI, currently Director of museums for the city of Rome (their CVs can be obtained from the Council’s Press Office).

Following their nomination, the Council is expected to designate during the second semester of 2003, the two leading figures who are to form part of the selection panel.

- **DESIGNATION OF THE EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF CULTURE FOR 2006**

The Council decided on the designation of the city of Patras in Greece as the European Capital of Culture 2006, on the basis of the Commission’s Communication (doc. 8494/03 + 8117/03).
EXTENSION OF THE CULTURE 2000 PROGRAMME

The Council took note of the Commission’s presentation of the proposal for the extension of the Culture 2000 programme for the years 2005-2006 (doc. 8495/03).

The proposal aims to extend the programme until the end of the current financial perspectives for the Union, with an additional budget of EUR 69.5 million. No changes are proposed to the programme’s objectives and procedures, the aim of the proposal being to make sure that its activities will continue beyond December 2004, currently its end date.

The current Culture 2000 programme has a total budget of EUR 167 million for the period 2000-2004. It grants support for cultural co-operation projects in all artistic and cultural sectors (e.g. performing arts, visual and plastic arts, literature, heritage, cultural history). The objectives of the programme are the promotion of a common cultural area characterised by both cultural diversity and a common cultural heritage.
TELEVISION WITHOUT FRONTIERS - WORK PROGRAMME 2003

The Council held an exchange of views on the Commission’s “Television without frontiers” (TWF) work programme for 2003, on the basis of a paper drawn by the Presidency.

The discussion focused mainly on the three themes covered by the public consultation recently conducted by the Commission (2-4 April 2003) as part of its evaluation exercise on the implementation of the TWF Directive, and with a view to its eventual future review:

- Access to events of major importance to society;

- Protection of general interests in television advertising, sponsorship, tele-shopping and self-promotion;

- Access to short extracts of major events.

Several delegations expressed their support for the maintenance of current provisions guaranteeing the access to broadcasts of events of major importance to society, with reference to the principle of access to information to all.

The vast majority of delegations acknowledged the importance of adapting current provisions on publicity to take into account recent and future developments in the use of new technologies in this area (e.g. digital TV and Internet). Several delegations underscored the importance of making rules in this area more flexible. Some delegations underlined the need to keep the balance between consumer protection and economic interests.

Several delegations considered the inclusion of provisions on access to short extracts of major events as a useful improvement in a possible successor to the present TWF Directive. However, different views were expressed on if, and how, this should be regulated.
A few delegations also mentioned other important issues for the eventual review of the TWF Directive, such as the need to promote the protection of minors and to consider the widening of its scope to include new technological developments in the audio-visual sector.

The Council was informed by the Commission that another public hearing is expected to take place on 23-25 June, where the following topics will be discussed: promotion of cultural diversity and of competitiveness of the European programme industry; protection of minors and public order; the right to reply; application (e.g. determination of the competent authority, role of the National Regulatory Authorities).

The purpose of the TWF Directive is to ensure free movement of broadcasts within the Internal Market while safeguarding certain important objectives of public interest such as cultural diversity, the right of reply, consumer protection and the protection of minors.
EXTENSION OF THE MEDIA PROGRAMMES TO 2006

The Council took note of the Commission’s presentation of the proposal for the extension of MEDIA-Training (training programme for professionals in the European audio-visual programme industry) and MEDIA-Plus (programme to encourage the development, distribution and promotion of European audio-visual works) \(\text{doc. 8496/03 + 8647/03}\).

The proposal aims to extend the two programmes by one year (2006) in order to synchronise them with the current financial perspectives for the Union. The current programmes end in December 2005. Moreover, the proposal increases their budget by EURO 7,4 million (MEDIA-Training) and by EUR 85,6 million (MEDIA-Plus).

MEDIA-Training (2001-2005), with a budget of EUR 50 million, aims at encouraging the setting up of European training initiatives allowing professionals of the audio-visual industry to increase their competence and their competitiveness on the international market.

MEDIA-Plus (2001-2005), with a budget of EUR 350 million, co-finances the development of production projects (e.g. feature films, television drama, documentaries, animation and new media), as well as the distribution and promotion of European audio-visual works.
OTHER BUSINESS

– VAT ON AUDIO RECORDS AND CASSETTES

The Council took note of an intervention by the French delegation on the reduction of value added tax (VAT) on records and audio-cassettes. The delegation wished to ask the Council to take the appropriate steps to look into this matter during the current year.

It is recalled, that the French delegation addressed the Council on this topic at its meeting on 11-12 November 2002.

– ASEM CONFERENCE ON CULTURES AND CIVILISATION FOR MINISTERS FOR CULTURE - Beijing, 10-11 June 2003

The Council took note of an intervention by the Danish delegation inviting Union Ministers of Culture to participate in the ASEM Conference on Cultures and Civilisations which is expected to take place in Beijing, China on 10-11 June 2003. The conference aims at promoting better understanding of the rich cultures and civilisations of ASEM countries (Brunei, China, Japan, Korea, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam and the fifteen Union Member States).

The Danish delegation informed the Council that in view of the current health crisis in that city related to the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) the Chinese authorities were considering postponing the date of the event or the possibility of holding it at a different location.

– SAVING IRAQ’S CULTURAL HERITAGE

The Council took note of an intervention by the Swedish delegation concerning the rescue of Iraq’s cultural heritage (for further details, please see the Declaration on the destruction of Iraq’s cultural heritage on page 19).
EVENTS IN THE MARGIN OF THE COUNCIL

– INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS OVER LUNCH

Ministers of Education met on 5 May to discuss informally over lunch the broader role of education and its cultural aspects, in connection with the Spring 2003 European Council Conclusions, as regards the building of the knowledge-based society.

Moreover, Culture and Audio-visual Affairs ministers discussed informally during lunch on 6 May the role of culture and audio-visual affairs in the future European Treaty, particularly in relation to the work currently under way in the European Convention.
ITEMS APPROVED WITHOUT DEBATE

CULTURE

Resolution on Archives on the Member States

"THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1. RECALLING the Council Resolution of 14 November 1991 on arrangements concerning archives\(^\text{27}\) as well as the Council Conclusions of 17 June 1994 concerning greater cooperation in the field of archives\(^\text{28}\),

2. RECALLING the Report of the group of experts on the co-ordination of Archives in the European Union published in 1994,

3. TAKING INTO ACCOUNT the on-going activities related to public access to documents and archives of the European Union,

4. STRESSES the importance of archives for the understanding of the history and culture of Europe,

5. STRESSES that well kept and accessible archives contribute to the democratic functioning of our societies, particularly during a period of major change in Europe,

6. CONSIDERS that special attention should be paid to the challenges for archive management in the context of the enlargement of the Union,

7. CONSIDERS that further development is needed in ICT applications and solutions in the field of archives,

8. INVITES THE COMMISSION to convene a group of experts representative also of acceding countries, appointed on the proposal of the relevant national Authorities, to address the following:

   a) the situation of the public archives in the Member States of the European Union including various aspects of the probable evolution of archives over the forthcoming years, taking into particular account the enlargement of the European Union,

   b) the consequences of the developments which have occurred in recent years in the field of archives, including particularly the development of new technologies,

\(^{28}\) OJ C 235 of 23.8.1994
c) promotion of concrete activities, such as
- the encouragement of appropriate measures to prevent damage to archives through catastrophes like flooding and to restore such documents and archives, and
- the strengthening of Europe-wide collaboration on the authenticity, long-term preservation and availability of electronic documents and archives,

d) enhancing co-ordination, information sharing and exchanging of good practice between the archives services,

e) possibilities of further integration of the work of this expert group with other relevant activities in this field at the European level, in particular the Action Plan eEurope.

9. INVITES THE COMMISSION to submit a report on this work, including orientations for increased future cooperation on archives at the European level, to the Council before the middle of 2004."

**YOUTH**

*The future of youth activities in the context of the new generation of programmes - Conclusions*

"WHEREAS

1. the Treaty provides that Community action is to be aimed at encouraging the development of exchange programmes for young people and youth workers;

2. the European Parliament and the Council have by Decision 1031/2000/EC of 13 April 2000 established the “Youth” Community action programme concerning a cooperation policy in the youth field, in order to allow young people to acquire knowledge, skills and competencies which may be one of the foundations of their future development, and to exercise responsible citizenship so as to become an active part of the European society;

3. the Laeken Declaration, annexed to the Conclusions of the European Council of 14 and 15 December 2001, on the Future of the European Union, states that one of the basic challenges facing the European Union is “how to bring citizens, and primarily the young, closer to the European design and the European Institutions”;

4. the Commission’s White paper of 21 November 2001 entitled “A new impetus for European youth” has been a starting point for the establishment of a framework of European cooperation in the youth field;"
5. the European Council of Copenhagen at 15 and 16 December 2002 endorsed the results of the accession negotiations for the enlargement of the European Union;

6. the Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 14 December 2000, concerning an action plan for mobility, notes that the mobility of young people is a major political goal and the Youth programmes represent appreciable progress and play an essential role for the achievement of this goal;

7. the Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 14 December 2000, on the social inclusion of young people, noting that young people, particularly the most vulnerable are particularly susceptible to social, political and cultural exclusion, invites the Commission and the Member States to promote broad access by a wide range of young people to Community and national initiatives and programmes designed for their benefit;

8. the Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 14 February 2002 on the added value of voluntary activity for young people in the context of the development of Community action on youth, invites the Commission and the Member States to take measures to strengthen and to further develop the role of voluntary activity for young people;

9. the Resolution of the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 28 June 2001, on promoting young people's initiative, enterprise and creativity: from exclusion to empowerment;

10. the Resolution of the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, of 27 June 2002, regarding the framework of the European cooperation in the youth field endorses participation, information, voluntary activities among young people and greater understanding and knowledge of youth, as its four thematic priorities;


1. HAVING REGARD to the preparation of the future generation of programmes in the field of education, training and youth,

2. UNDERLINES that the existing “Youth” Community action programme constitutes the basic means and the lever to promote European Cooperation in the youth field and the most important instrument for creating and implementing youth policies, in a more complete, more coherent and more intersectorial way,

3. NOTES that there is a need for links with other relevant Community programmes in the context of horizontal consideration of youth in other policies,
4. RECALLS that the "Youth" programme offers young people, and particularly young people in difficulty, the chance of acquiring experience and skills by participating in activities outside school, thus contributing to their personal development in the context of non-formal learning,

5. RECALLS that, in the field of youth, the European Union has strengthened its relations with third countries under the actions of the ‘Youth’ programme,

6. NOTES that the enlargement of the European Union introduces new geographical, demographic, sociological and cultural factors affecting young people,

7. RECOGNISES that young people play a crucial role in the promotion of European citizenship and identity,

8. NOTES the intention of the Ministers to contribute to the reflection launched by the Commission concerning the future programmes, but without prejudice to the results of national consultations on the future generation of programmes and the impact assessments of the existing programmes, and in full respect of the Commission's right of initiative,

9. STRESSES the need to maintain and develop the existing Community instruments specifically addressed to young people, which is essential for the development of Member States' co-operation in the field of youth, in the context of the future generation of programmes,

10. STRESSES moreover that the priorities and objectives of these instruments should be aligned with the new Framework of European Cooperation in the field of Youth.

UNDERLINES the importance of pursuing efforts in order to:

1. increase participation of all young people, especially for those threatened by or experiencing social exclusion;

2. strengthen dialogue and cooperation between young people in Europe and the rest of the world;

3. encourage young people's initiatives fostering innovation and entrepreneurship from local to European level;

4. promote voluntary activities, not only as a mean for acquiring skills but also as a core value of active citizenship;

5. respect and disseminate the universal values of democracy, equality, and respect for human rights, as well as combat racism, xenophobia and other forms of discrimination against and among young people;

6. promote mobility and new technologies as well as investigating other innovative methods as means for supporting youth strategies."
FISHERIES

Kiribati fishing zone

The Council adopted a Regulation on the conclusion of the Agreement between the European Community and the Republic of Kiribati on fishing within the Kiribati fishing zone (doc. 7210/03).

This Agreement, which is valid for an initial period of five years and be renewed for further periods of two years, establishes fishing opportunities allocated among some EU Member States. France is being allocated a percentage of available licences for purse seine vessels. Spain and Portugal have a right for six vessels each for long-liners. Licence applications, which would not be filled, can be dispatched among other EU Member States. The Member States concerned must notify information on the catches to the Commission. In return for the fishing opportunities granted by Kiribati, the Community will provide a financial contribution paid to the Kiribati Government, equal to € 2,210,000 over five years (€ 546,000 the first year and € 416,000 the following years). The total financial contribution corresponds to a catch within the Kiribati fishing zone of 8,400 tonnes of tuna for the first year and 6,400 tonnes of tuna per year for the following years.

INTERNAL MARKET

Annual and consolidated accounts * - Public deliberation

The Council adopted the Directive, as amended by the European Parliament in first reading, on the annual and consolidated accounts of certain types of companies, banks and other financial institutions and insurance undertakings. (doc 3611/03).

The Directive, which amends Directives 78/660/EEC, 83/349/EEC, 86/635/EEC and 91/674/EEC, is one of a number aimed at modernising rules on accounting. It provides an option for Member States to use facilitated adoption of international accounting standards (IAS) and application of these standards for certain companies, following the adoption in June of the Regulation on the application of IAS in the EU.

EXTERNAL RELATIONS

Switzerland – Free movement of persons – Economic and social cohesion

The Council and the Representatives of the Member States adopted a Decision authorising the Commission to negotiate the adaptation, in the light of the enlargement of the European Union, of two agreements with Switzerland. The negotiation will aim at modifying the Agreement on the free movement of persons and the Agreement on a financial contribution by Switzerland to economic and social cohesion in the EU so as to take account of the admission by the EU of the ten new Member States.
TRADE POLICY

Antidumping – Hot-rolled steel coils, tube and pipe fittings

The Council adopted a Regulation amending certain Commission and Council decisions regarding anti-dumping measures applicable to imports into the Community of certain hot-rolled coils and tube and pipe fittings of iron or steel (doc. 8141/03). The producer countries affected by these measures are Bulgaria, South Africa, Serbia and Montenegro, Thailand, Chinese Taipei, the Czech Republic, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea, Russia and Slovakia.

The Regulation specifies the anti-dumping measures that apply to these imports until 28 March 2005, in the event that safeguard tariff quotas provided for under Commission Decision 283/2000/ECSC and Council Regulations 584/96, 763/2000 and 1514/2002 are exhausted or are not granted.

APPOINTMENTS

Committee of the Regions

The Council adopted five Decisions appointing:

- Ms Ulrike RODUST as a member of the Committee of the Regions in place of Ms Heide SIMONIS for the remainder of her term of office, which ends on 25 January 2006 (doc. 8262/03).

- Ms Heide SIMONIS as an alternate member of the Committee of the Regions in place of Ms Ulrike RODUST for the remainder of her term of office, which ends on 25 January 2006 (doc. 8263/03).

- Mr André ROSSINOT as a member of the Committee of the Regions in place of Mr Jean-Paul DELEVOYE for the remainder of his term of office, which ends on 25 January 2006 (doc. 8322/03).

- Mr Jacques VALADE, as a member of the Committee of the Regions in place of Mr Jean-Pierre RAFFARIN for the remainder of his term of office, which ends on 25 January 2006 (doc. 8323/03).

- Ms Elisabeth MORIN, as an alternate member of the Committee of the Regions in place of Ms Nicole AMELINE for the remainder of her term of office, which ends on 25 January 2006 (doc. 8324/03).