

The Magazine

Education and training | Culture | Youth | Multilingualism | Sport | Citizenship

N°29

Bringing innovation to the innovation process. EIT is born



The Magazine ²⁹

SUMMARY



Foreword
PG 3



Bringing innovation to the innovation process
PG 5



Piloting new governance for integrated knowledge partnerships?
PG 10



2008 – the trigger year for a framework for European qualifications
PG 13



Delivering lifelong learning for knowledge, creativity and innovation
PG 17



Amin Malouf
Identity, diversity and multilingualism
PG 21



LANGUAGES MEAN BUSINESS
Multilingualism can make Europe more competitive
PG 22



Erasmus Mundus
European higher education aims even wider in 2008
PG 24



It's official:
"Culture matters for the European Project"
PG 27



Together in diversity
towards a new intercultural perspective in Europe
PG 30



Golden Stars for top European performers
PG 34



The White Paper on Sport
time for teamwork
PG 36



Another 50th anniversary
the Commission Library
PG 38

© EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, 2008

EDITED BY KAREL BARTAK

GRAPHIC DESIGN BY STEFANO MATTEI

REPRODUCTION IS AUTHORISED PROVIDED THE SOURCE IS ACKNOWLEDGED.



EUROPE DIRECT IS A SERVICE TO HELP YOU FIND ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EUROPEAN UNION

FREEPHONE NUMBER (*): 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11

(*CERTAIN MOBILE TELEPHONE OPERATORS DO NOT ALLOW ACCESS TO 800 NUMBERS OR THESE CALLS MAY BE BILLED.)

MORE INFORMATION ON THE EUROPEAN UNION IS AVAILABLE ON THE INTERNET (© [HTTP://EUROPA.EU](http://europa.eu)).

CATALOGUING DATA CAN BE FOUND AT THE END OF THIS PUBLICATION. - LUXEMBOURG: OFFICE FOR OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES, 2008

ISSN 1023- 3725

PRINTED IN BELGIUM

PRINTED ON WHITE CHLORINE-FREE PAPER



Foreword

Innovation is central to the European Union's strategic thinking; because the Union's economic and social objectives will be met in full only through exploiting Europe's genius for innovation. That is why innovation takes pride of place in this issue of *The Magazine*. The start of 2008 sees the formal start of one of the principal mechanisms the EU is creating to foster innovation - the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT).

The EIT represents a new approach to boosting Europe's innovation potential.

The focus of EIT is on overcoming one of Europe's longstanding weaknesses: Europe possesses brilliant researchers; but it is less successful in generating innovations and in turning this potential into effective products.

In effect, EIT is an innovation in the art of innovation. It will be a flagship for excellence at European level, bringing together the best that the scientific, business and education sectors can offer to boost the Union's innovation capacity. You can read the latest news about how EIT is developing in the lead article in this issue. You can also see what some of the key figures in the research community and industry think about it - and what they are hoping for from it.

Other synergies between business, education and culture also feature in this issue of *The Magazine*. There are updates on how companies are coming to recognize the merits of multilingualism, how the EU is responding to the demands of business and education for cross-border comparability of qualifications, how the Education and Training 2010 work programme is helping to ensure that education and training make a strong contribution to the Lisbon process, and how the successes of Erasmus Mundus will be integrated into the next phase of this expanding higher education programme.

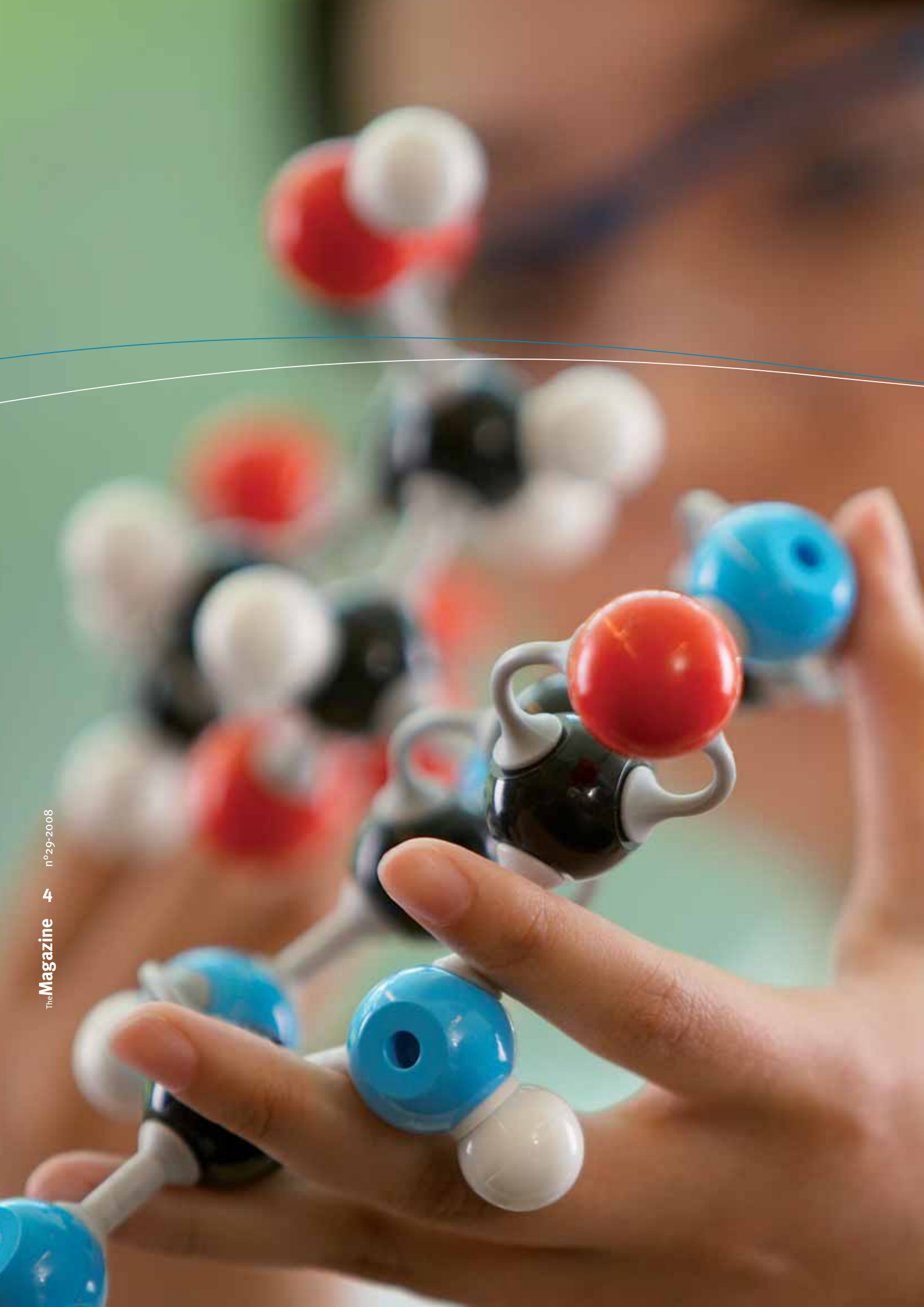
But boosting Europe's economic prospects is far from being the only - or indeed the principal - preoccupation of the Union. The quality of its citizens' lives, and the quality of the interaction between citizens, also receive major attention in this issue. 2008 is the Year of Intercultural Dialogue, and you can read about how it is developing.

You can also see what the European Agenda for Culture promises. The new programme supporting the Agenda is a historic breakthrough, in that it springs from the first top-level explicit recognition by all the member states - at the December 2007 European Council - of the importance of culture as a central aspect of the European Union.

More than ever before, in 2008 the European Union is a unique blend of pragmatism and personal values, of commerce and culture, underpinned by a growing sense of European citizenship. DG EAC is proud of its contribution to this mix, and we are determined to ensure we fulfil our mission of helping education and culture play their full role as Europe continues to evolve.

We hope you will enjoy reading this issue of *The Magazine*.

Odile Quintin,
Director General for
education and culture





Bringing **innovation** to the innovation process **EIT IS BORN**

European innovation is going to receive a major boost from early in 2008. With the adoption in March of the legal framework for the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), the stage is set for a new approach to promoting innovation in Europe. The primary aim is to reinforce Europe's capacity to transform education and research results into business opportunities. To do this, EIT is preparing to establish strategic partnerships among Europe's best business, research and higher education actors and bodies. At this crucial stage in EIT's evolution, The Magazine takes a look at how it is going to function, and at what some of the key players in research and in industry think about it.

One of the biggest challenges that Europe faces today is how to stimulate innovation. In an evermore competitive globalising world economy, success is increasingly being determined by the ability of businesses and societies to be innovative. At a European Council meeting in Lahti, Finland, in October 2006, the EU's leaders agreed on a ten-point programme for action at national and European levels to foster innovation. High on the agreed agenda was the proposed establishment of the EIT, at the intersection between education, R&D and enterprise.

EIT is an EU response to address the innovation gap

EIT is itself an innovation, designed to break through the barriers that exist in Europe to successful innovation. Its central function will be to overcome fragmentation in the knowledge triangle between higher education, research and industry. This approach is based on the reality behind all effective innovation: innovation is not a linear process. It arises from contacts and exchanges at the frontiers between different fields and actors, and across links in the innovation chain.

EIT is a strategic partnership between key players in business, research organisations and universities

EIT is a new model of collaboration, in that it embeds the business dimension in all knowledge activities, from governance to design and implementation. It brings together a critical mass of human and physical resources to unlock their innovation potential. It provides a new form of partnership in which a university, a research centre and a centre for developing applied business solutions will become a reference point of excellence, at the point of overlap between private and public sectors, and between education, research and innovation. It is a unique experiment, which could become a model in Europe.



EIT will have an innovative structure

In line with its innovative objectives, EIT will be equipped with an innovative high-calibre structure, responsive to the needs of innovation, with activities focused in a series of Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICS) that will bring together the best European resources for research, education and innovation.

A Governing Board of eighteen independent members providing balanced expertise in business, research and education will set EIT strategy, decide on the areas for investment, select Knowledge and Innovation Communities (KICS), and monitor and evaluate their work. The Board is scheduled to be appointed in mid-2008.

An ad hoc Identification Committee was set up in February to recommend members of the Governing Board, so as to guarantee independence, legitimacy and credibility of the process. It comprises four prominent European professionals of unquestionable independence, providing a balance of expertise from across the EU. They are Professor Günter Stock, President of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences and Humanities (who is the chairman); Professor Miklos Boda, advisor to the Rector at the Budapest University of Technology and Economics; Cecilia Schelin Seidegård, chairwoman of the Royal University of Technology in Stockholm; and Professor Ronan Stéphan, director for industrial affairs and technology transfer of the French science research council, CNRS, and executive director of France Innovation Scientifique et Transfert. In a first phase, they will consult relevant European organisations on the selection criteria, then in a second phase on the potential candidates. The appointments will be formally made by the Commission, after informing the European Parliament and the Council of the outcome of the selection process.



R. Paasilinna, Finnish Socialist Member of the European Parliament, and rapporteur for the Parliament on EIT:

The EIT will concentrate on innovations, since lack of innovations is Europe's Achilles' heel. We are not that bad at education or research but we often seem to have problems when ideas need to be turned into commercial products. Obviously the EIT will not solve all of our problems, but it can be a step in the right direction and serve as one example of academia and business world co-operation, something that we would need much more than what we see today.

EIT will bring gains for business

Business stands to gain from the EIT because it will be at the centre of its strategic planning, and will have a unique opportunity to focus its activities on emerging areas that have the potential to boost growth and employment. Business culture and an entrepreneurial mindset are part of the offerings of the EIT, as a key aspect of its creation of a new mix of skills, suited to the needs of the knowledge economy and society.

Business will help finance the EIT, through contracts, donations, capital endowments and other mechanisms. The extent to which industry provides financial support will be the touchstone for EIT's success and credibility. Business will also help generate value from EIT's activities and from the use of the intellectual property rights that will arise from its achievements. Particular benefits are likely to flow from business start-ups, technology transfer, and licensing.



Arnaldo Abruzzini
Secretary General Eurochambres:

For Eurochambres, it is clear: if the EIT can deliver more new products and new services to the market, if it can deliver more appropriately educated workers to the workforce, and if it can stimulate more entrepreneurs to set up and sustain innovative enterprises, then it must be supported and implemented. The participation of smaller firms should be encouraged via adapted, simplified participation rules. There must be clear opportunities for smaller firms in the exploitation of the research results. The presence of business incubators like Chambers of Commerce should be valued in the selection of the Knowledge Information Communities. This is why EUROCHAMBRES cares about the composition of the Governing Board, to be decided upon soon.



Philippe de Buck
Secretary General of BUSINESSEUROPE:

The European Institute for Innovation and Technology provides an opportunity to match the rhetoric with pragmatic pro-active action. Europe and the wider world increasingly face challenges to which no one institute, organization or country can alone provide the answer. The EIT offers a unique opportunity to bring together the best minds in Europe with a view to responding to challenges such as climate change and energy dependency, and it is the hope of business in Europe that it will succeed in its stated objectives. What is critical to improve Europe's innovative potential is to strengthen knowledge transfer and to foster more effective cooperation between academia, research institutes and business.



Andrew Dearing,
Secretary-General, European Industrial
Research Management Association:

One of Europe's greatest assets is our tightly-knit network of universities and public research institutes, many with very long traditions. This network cannot easily be replicated by our competitors. We need to strengthen it and ensure that all parts contribute fully to scientific leadership and our economic and social well-being. This is particularly important as innovation, research and education become increasingly "open" and interdependent activities, and as effective connections between public science and the worlds of industry and key social services like healthcare and transportation become more crucial. Where the connections are strong, at institutes like IMEC in Belgium, Europe leads.

As a flagship initiative, EIT's role will be two-fold. It must sustain the connection between research and innovation in a few key fields vital to Europe's medium and long-term interests, where the worlds of science and business necessarily meet and where existing structures will not meet our needs. And it must act as a role model that demonstrates how to establish long-term partnerships that build trust and confidence, according to the specific requirements of these fields. EIT is a long-term experiment that will take time to develop. Its success depends upon a willingness to let it learn and develop, in ways that appeal to the distinct, yet often overlapping, missions and interests of public and private sector organisations.

EIT will bring gains for universities and research centres

Universities and research teams will be able to achieve a critical mass of resources needed to compete with leading global competitors. These teams will develop a European dimension, through their involvement in trans-national research, education and innovation activities. They will also have access and links to the most excellent resources in Europe, benefiting in terms of knowledge transfer and visibility - a win-win situation.



Chris Hull,
Secretary General, European Association
of Research and Technology Organisations:

There is definitely a place for the EIT, but because its precise mandate is still being defined, the Governing Board - and politicians - will need to make the right moves in the first couple of years so as ensure it is positioned advantageously. It can fill an important gap in the current European R&D landscape if it is made to develop as a hub for long-term strategic research and innovation, targeting critical problems and challenges of shared European concern - such as energy supply, civil security or the welfare demands of an ageing population.

Current European initiatives to deliver answers to issues like this are not sufficiently strategic. Funding for cooperation under the Seventh EU Framework Programme is concentrated on two- to four-year research projects which are self-contained, tightly focused, and rarely strategic. The EIT should be fund seven- to twelve-year innovation programmes that are long-range, ambitious, containing an evolving set of research and implementation projects defined successively to work towards solutions to the targeted strategic challenge or problem.

It could complement European Technology Platforms and Joint Technology Initiatives - valuable industry-driven initiatives, but naturally limited, since industry's capacity for risk is limited. The EIT could tackle longer-term, high-risk subjects beyond industry's immediate horizons - and in so doing, could provide a model for public-private funding, with public funding predominating up-front to pioneer early-stage, high-risk research, and with private funding increasing as practical applications and market opportunities emerge.

It could also complement the European Research Council, where the focus on "frontier research" and "scientific excellence" will tend to support research which is academically motivated. If the EIT focus is "relevance" and "innovation", it can help find practical solutions to shared European concerns through integrated programmes of basic and applied research.





Rector Georg Winckler, President of the European University Association:

In my role at EUA, my priority has been to ensure that Europe's universities have been recognised as key stakeholders in the debate on the EIT. EUA wants to see the EIT as a valuable new instrument for Europe's universities to continue strengthening their training, research and innovation capacities with external partners. We look forward to an EIT Governing Board with strong involvement of university leaders appointed according to a similar consultative process to that established for the ERC Scientific Council and the forthcoming European Research Area Board (ERAB) and an open competition for the first round of "Knowledge and Innovation Communities".



Professor Ramon Wyss Secretary General of CLUSTER

(Consortium Linking Universities of Science and Technology for Education and Research)

My initial scepticism over the EIT - based on concerns that the European Parliament building in Strasbourg would be converted into a new university with a strong bureaucracy and little science - has given way to optimism. The European Commission's openness to discussion with stakeholders, and the resulting change in the concept, has been very beneficial for me and many of my colleagues. It induced reflection among university leaders about the role of universities in Europe. In our CLUSTER network, a consortium of 12 leading science and technology universities, of which I am Secretary General, we realised by the end of 2006 that the EIT constitutes a great opportunity, which has sparked new life in our network. The EIT concept promotes strategic top-down discussion of cooperation and alliances on a competitive basis between education, research and innovation, but for the first time, involving industrial partners too, on a European scale. -This is an entirely novel form of partnership, involving institutions, rather than research groups, in cooperation with industrial partners.

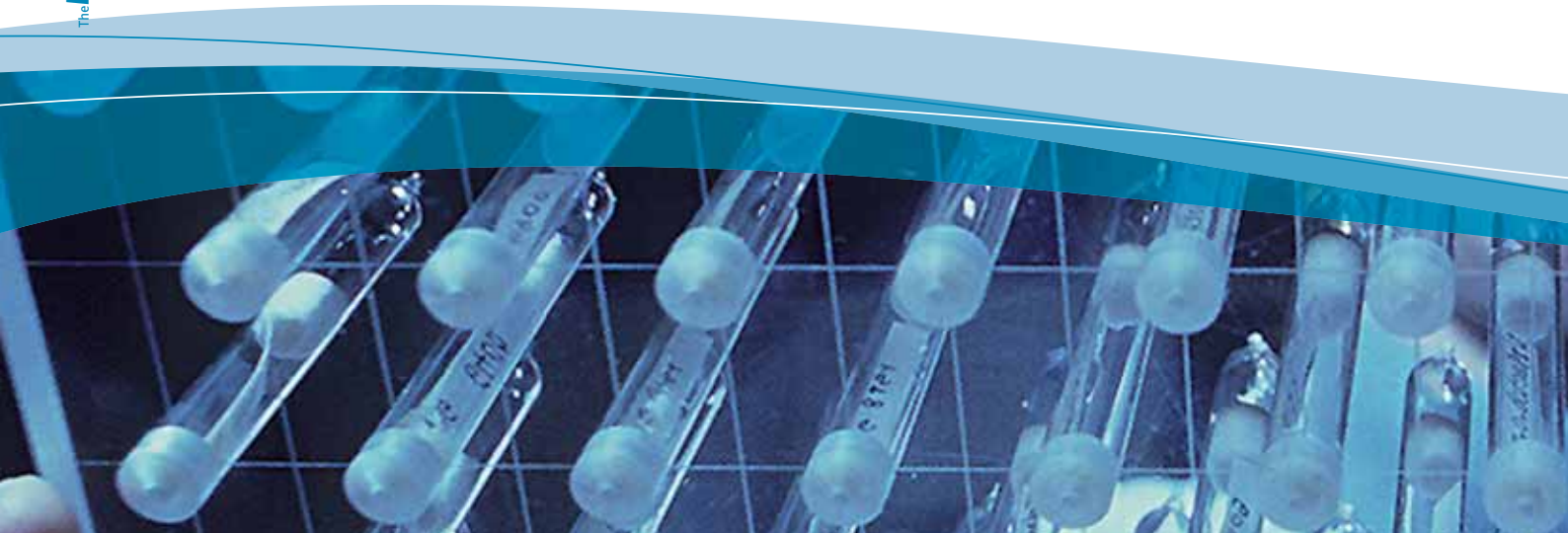
EIT will bring gains for regions and other players

Regions can act as hubs of European innovation - and derive the benefits. Efficient growth and innovation strategies can be tailored as part of strategies designed at local and regional level by authorities and relevant social and economic development partners. It is the local and regional authorities who are best-placed to know and nurture their local growth factors, particularly among their smaller enterprises - and this is all the more true when the challenge is turning innovation into economic growth. In an increasingly globalised world, regions are in a position to anticipate and promote economic change through innovation, and the EIT, with its start-up and spin-off effects, and its role in knowledge transfer, will bring them new chances to boost their own growth. As Regional Affairs Commissioner Danuta Hubner puts it: ***"Innovation can enhance regional development and a regional approach can foster good innovation"***.



Dr. Manel Balcells President of the Executive Committee, Biocat, BioRegion of Catalonia

The future European Institute of Innovation and Technology is a great opportunity for Europe to make innovation the main driver of the European Union's development. It represents a major European innovation project relying on technological excellence and regional cooperation. By articulating the institute around selected development cores (the future Knowledge and Innovation Communities), the EIT will stimulate the much-needed collaboration between business and institutions, and between public and private sectors. Here at Biocat (the BioRegion of Catalonia), which itself is an innovative cluster, we support this formula. This will be a real European net of networks, confidently addressing a common development based on regional realities, giving concrete expression to territorial and sectoral cohesion in Europe, and acting on criteria of excellence - a true metacluster.





Professor Dr. Günter Stock
President of the Berlin-Brandenburg
Academy of Sciences and Humanities

Prof. Stock has been appointed chairman of the Identification Committee that will select the candidates for the EIT's Governing Board.

Here he gives his views on the value of the EIT - and on how he sees it "opening a new chapter of bridging scientific and business support programmes for Europe". As he makes clear, the innovative approach of the EIT is in tune with the new demands of linking research, business and education in today's innovation process. The result of his work over the next few months should produce the personalities that will take on what he terms "this exciting role" in directing the work of the EIT in the future.

With the creation of the EIT the European Union is complementing in a creative manner what it started when it set up the European Research Council - the quest to enhance Europe's competitiveness in the 21st century. The EIT is aiming at providing opportunities for new structures. These will be able to bring together academia, research and business, and to help the scientific community inside and outside universities to create models of how best to satisfy both the interests of science and the application of science in product research.

An integrative process like this is highly dependent on the people involved. They will have to be people who are educated and are willing to take part in this challenging process that the EU has initiated. This is why it is more than appropriate that education, and higher education in particular, is the third pillar of this innovation.

In my view, the approach that the EU is taking with the EIT is well-tuned to meeting its objectives. Instead of creating large centres of excellence, it is wisely aiming to provide positive incentives with generous grants to support new models of interaction and integration between academic and commercial research.

But although the nature of the research model itself has changed so dramatically, we still haven't adapted our approach to these new needs. We just don't have the organisational models and institutions that allow for such interactive research models. The EIT is the answer. It shows the way, it gives life to the idea, and even offers financial incentives to experiment along these new lines which will permit a much better understanding of how to organise this challenging interaction.

The Identification Committee that I chair is just starting its work now - and is scheduled to deliver before this summer. It has to start by drafting a list of criteria for nominating members of the Governing Board in consultation with stakeholders. Once agreed, we can begin our search, and ask for proposals for nominations. From all of this, we will come up with a list of 18 potential members, who will, I hope, accept this exciting role. They will be the key protagonists in opening a new chapter of bridging scientific, higher education and business support programmes within and for Europe.

THE NEXT STEPS 2008-2009

• **NOMINATION OF THE GOVERNING BOARD,
JUNE 2008**

• **DECISION ON THE EIT SEAT,
JUNE 2008**

**SELECTION AND LAUNCH OF THE FIRST KICS,
WITHIN 18 MONTHS AFTER THE NOMINATION
OF THE GOVERNING BOARD**

(BY END 2009)

▶ <http://ec.europa.eu/eit>

What is the "Knowledge Triangle?"

The knowledge triangle refers to the interaction between research, higher education and innovation, the key drivers of a knowledge-based society.

The situation in Europe today is characterised by a fragmentation of knowledge systems: universities, research centres, corporate R&D departments and other bodies exist side by side, often without much communication, let alone cooperation between them.

Research excellence in Europe exists in many specific areas, such as solar power, hydrogen cells, bio-informatics, nanotechnology, and others. The companies in Europe which make commercial use of that excellence are often situated close to universities or research centres, but without a systematic link between them. Universities train today's students and tomorrow's researchers, often in isolation from the business world.

Within the Lisbon Strategy, the European Union has reached consensus that the three elements of the "knowledge triangle" – higher education, research and innovation - need to be better linked as they form the basis of Europe's competitiveness.

To provide a model for such a link that will hopefully inspire universities, research centres and companies around Europe, the Commission proposed to establish a European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT). The EIT will seek to unlock the potential of the knowledge triangle by striking the right balance between scientific/educational excellence and innovation/business acumen.

Piloting new governance for integrated KNOWLEDGE PARTNERSHIPS

Cooperation is not just a good idea in maximising knowledge and boosting innovation. Cooperation is needed in the governance of new forms of integrated research activities. That is why the European Parliament allocated €5 million in 2007 to support a pilot action on the “cooperation between European Institutes of Technology”.

The purpose was to assist collaborations that would demonstrate the real need for excellence-driven organisations to move up a step in their integration. Four projects have been selected to design, implement and test new models of cooperation in the knowledge triangle, with the objective of making them into truly integrated partnerships.

The pilot projects have no link with the establishment of the EIT - the terms of reference make this crystal clear. Nor will these partnerships have any preferential participation in the evolution of the EIT. But they could provide useful experience on the development of the integrated partnerships which are the cornerstone of the EIT model. Starting in January 2008, these projects are now going to run over the following 24 months, with a well-balanced representation of the organisations operating in the knowledge triangle across Europe.

“It’s fantastic to get this opportunity”, according to Håkan Engqvist at UU Innovation, who will be coordinating the project. “This is a hot research field. A few years ago biomaterials were used to repair damage to bodily organs, but today it’s all about regenerating growing back the organ on site in the body,” says Håkan Engqvist. He says the EU decision brings two years of funding to create and test various models in which research, education, and innovation can be coordinated in a way that makes it possible to exert rigorous control over inputs. Another important area is to find a good solution to issues of ownership and rights to research findings.

“This is of great value to the positioning of Uppsala University in anticipation of coming major EU investments. Here we’ll be able to illuminate the potential created through combinations of our strong research areas, in this case materials research and biological/medical research, and we are beefing up our efforts to find practical applications for our research,” says Anders Hallberg, vice-chancellor of Uppsala University.

Other key partners in planning and implementing the project are Avedas Innovation Management in Karlsruhe, Stockholm Science City; INEP from Porto in Portugal; University College, London; Semmelweis University, Budapest, Hungary; Groningen University Hospital, Holland; BioMade, Groningen, Holland; and CEBR, UK.

1. BRIDGE

Bridging Biomaterial Research Excellence between Industry and Academia across Europe, coordinated by Uppsala University, Sweden:

The overall objective of BRIDGE is to lay the foundations for a European hub that will foster innovation and commercialization of research results in nano-medicine, with a focus on “biomaterial research for regenerative medicine”.



2. SUCCESS

Searching Unprecedented Cooperations on Climate and Energy to ensure Sustainability, coordinated by the Universitat Karlsruhe, Germany:

This project aim to establish efficient and effective structures of collaboration among widely-distributed consortia in Europe in sustainable energy and climate change.

3. GAST

Green and Safe Road Transportation, coordinated by Inno Germany AG:

GAST aims at creating, testing and validating the conditions, structures and processes which will make possible a successful transition towards a sustainable EU level partnership based on the knowledge triangle in the field of “greener and safer road transportation”.

About 20 universities, research institutes, technology transfer organisations, engineering companies, vehicle manufacturer and automotive suppliers from all over Europe have joined forces to develop new partnerships for “greener and safer road transportation” in the framework of the GAST - Green And Safe road Transportation - pilot project. The project achievements will be presented during a conference to be held in Karlsruhe in September 2009.

4. ComplexEIT

Complexity, from nanotechnologies to large systems; Coordinated by the Commissariat à l’Energie Atomique, France:

The overall goal of ComplexEIT is to prepare a model of multifaceted and multilevel governance for integrated partnerships in areas of complexity (from nanotechnologies to large systems), and to test and evaluate the model in the development of interregional collaboration between Dresden, Grenoble and Cork.

The goal of ComplexEIT is to answer one major challenge: the governance of a European Institute of Technology.

The specific outputs of the project will be:

- *to recommend best practices for innovation partnerships in the knowledge triangle*
- *to identify and evaluate new potential models of governance*
- *to disseminate propositions for governance.*

The partners in the project are: Airbus, Thales, Bosch, STMicroelectronics, GAIA (SME association), CEA, FhG, IMEC, Digiteo, Polish Academy of Science, Sciences Po Paris, University College Cork, New University of Lisbon, University of Pisa, INPG, cities of Dresden, Cork and Grenoble. The kick-off meeting took place in January in Toulouse.





EQF 2008

the trigger year for a **framework** for European qualifications

From this year on Europeans can look forward to benefiting from greater comparability of qualifications across the member states and beyond. The European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF) is due for adoption in early 2008. One of the key advantages is that within a couple of years, it should be easier for European citizens to get jobs or to sign up for courses outside the country where they studied.

The EQF is a translation grid for qualifications throughout Europe, agreed by 32 countries. It will make qualifications more easily readable, so that employers and educational establishments across Europe can compare and understand qualifications they are unfamiliar with. The increasing diversity of qualifications in every member state makes it all the more necessary to create a common reference point - a common language making it possible to compare the outcomes from people's different learning experiences.

The core of the framework is an eight-level qualification index, with each level described in terms of knowledge, skills and competence. The eight levels cover the entire span of qualifications, from those achieved at the end of compulsory education, up to those awarded at the highest level of academic and professional or vocational education and training.

Countries are invited to relate their national qualification levels to the European reference established by the EQF. It is a voluntary process, but when a country decides to relate its qualifications systems or frameworks to the EQF, it is asked to do so in two stages. The first stage - linking national qualifications levels to the EQF - should be completed by 2010. The second - introducing a reference to the EQF in all new certificates, diplomas and other qualifications - should be completed by 2012.

The European Union has been working to create this framework for more than three years, and it has emerged from policy cooperation within the Education & Training 2010 work programme. The Commission proposed a Recommendation on the establishment of the EQF in September 2006. The European Parliament voted in favour in October 2007, and the Council gave its political agreement last November, opening the way for formal adoption early in 2008.

The two main purposes

The EQF will

- *support cross-border mobility by making it easier to compare the content and profile of different national and sectoral qualifications.*
- *facilitate lifelong learning - by making it easier to judge how qualifications from different sectors and systems can be combined: this will improve access to education, training and learning, and make it easier to progress from level to level.*

The EQF should have a real impact on citizens' mobility and lifelong learning opportunities, and is another concrete element in making a reality of the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs.



Central to the EQF is a radical shift in focus. Instead of considering qualifications merely in terms of learning inputs (such as the length of a learning experience, the content of teaching, or the type of institution), it concentrates on learning outcomes (the knowledge, skills and competences acquired). This brings some significant advantages. It supports a better match between education and training provision and the needs of the labour market. It makes it easier to validate learning that takes place outside formal education and training (such as on-the-job training and informal learning). And it improves the transparency of qualifications, for individual citizens and employers alike.

The biggest challenge in developing the EQF was to develop a clear and consistent description of the eight levels of qualifications. The description had to be sufficiently general to cover all European countries, but specific enough to make sense of particular qualifications at national and sectoral level.

After discussions between technical experts from all the countries involved in the development of the EQF, agreement was reached to base the framework on the distinction between knowledge, skills and competence. This was seen as the most accurate way to categorise learning outcomes - and owed much to other similar differentiations in learning outcomes used at national and sectoral levels.

Distinguishing between the different levels of qualifications was another big challenge. Finally, it was agreed to take the following factors into account:

- the complexity and depth of knowledge and understanding;
- the degree of necessary support or instruction;
- the degree of integration, independence and creativity required;
- the range and complexity of application/practice;
- the degree of transparency and dynamics of situations.

Agreement on a common approach among so many countries in such sensitive matters shows the wide determination to make progress in this field – as well as a willingness to find pragmatic solutions.

An overarching framework

The EQF encompasses general and adult education, vocational education and training, as well as higher education. This is an important aspect of the EQF in its role as an instrument for promoting lifelong learning - where individuals increasingly pursue education, training and learning across different countries, education sectors and institutions. It goes beyond the scope of initiatives such as the European Higher Education Framework (the Bologna process), which are valuable within a particular sub-sector, but are not designed to address the linkages between sectors.





The overarching approach introduced by EQF can, for example, make clear how higher academic education is linked to general and vocational education and training, or indeed to initial and adult education and training. The new framework will help overcome fragmentation, and will support coherence and transition between different education and training sub-sectors.

Towards National Qualifications Frameworks

The strong agreement among European, national and sectoral stakeholders on the need for a European reference framework, based on learning outcomes, has not only given rise to the EQF. It is also reflected in the influence the EQF is already having on the development of National Qualifications Frameworks, which most Member States are now developing, often as part of wider national reform processes.

The Commission will support the process by promoting cooperation and the exchange of experience in implementing the new framework. It is already funding projects bringing together groups of countries and sectors testing the implementation of the EQF, and it will continue to do so. The effective implementation of the EQF in all member states will make a real difference to citizens' lives.

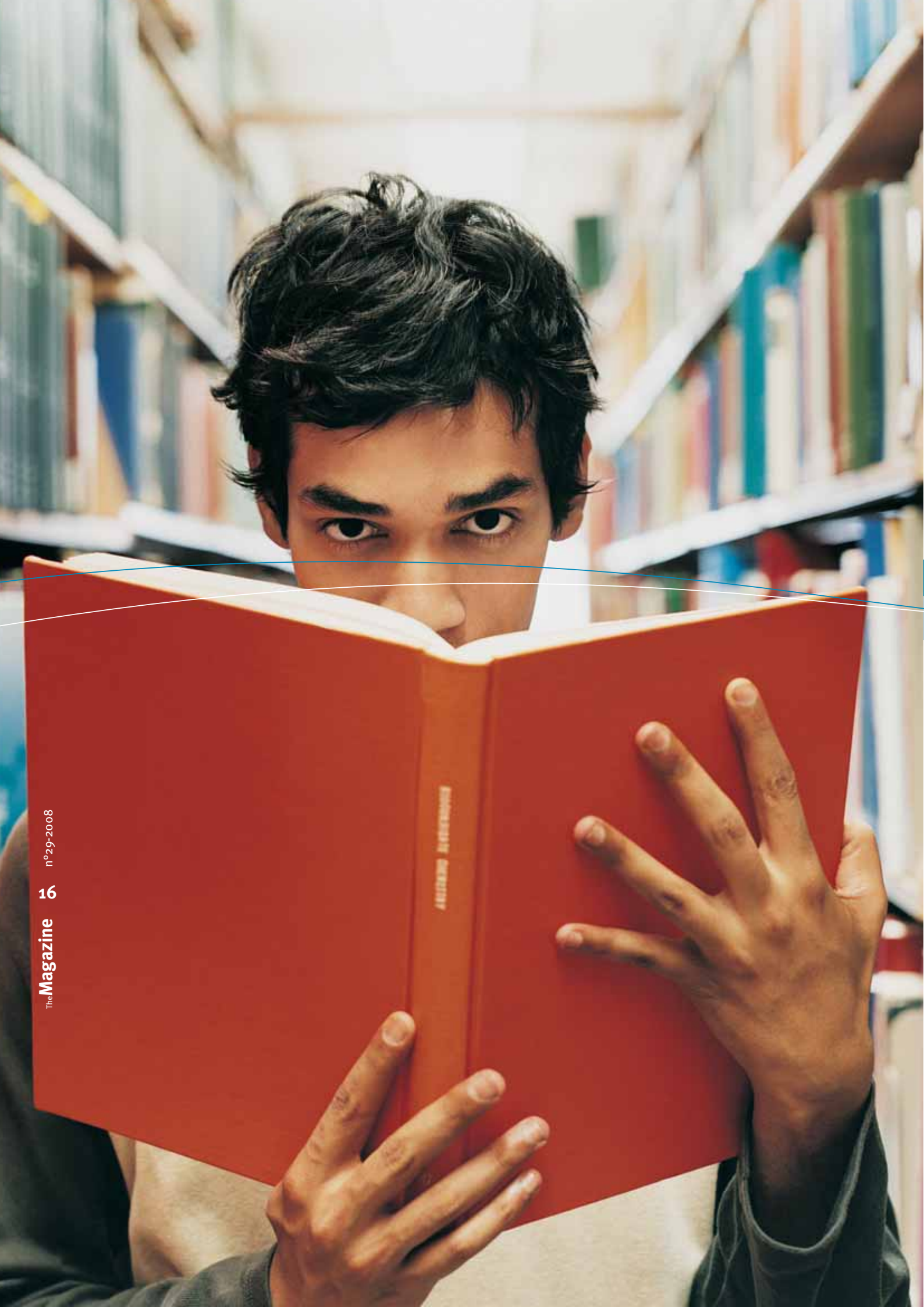
“People in Europe too often face obstacles when they try to move from one country to another to learn or work. They even sometimes face obstacles when they want to move from one part of their own country’s education system to another, e.g. from vocational education and training to higher education. The EQF will make different qualifications more easily readable between different European countries, and so promote increased mobility for learning or working”.

Commissioner Ján Figel’, the European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth



**European
Qualifications
Framework**







EDUCATION & TRAINING 2010

Delivering lifelong learning for knowledge, creativity and innovation

Commission report on the implementation of the
Education and Training 2010 work programme

The importance of education and training has been increasingly recognised at European and national level, largely due to the launch in 2000 of the Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs. All Member States today agree that the quality of education and training is a key ingredient for a successful European Union.

The main responsibility for putting this consensus into effect lies with national authorities. But the EU plays a central role in supporting policy development and reform processes. The Commission's Lisbon package adopted in December stresses that more growth and jobs in the EU depend on cutting the number of early school-leavers, on lifelong learning programmes; and on better integration of research and development, education, and innovation.

The Education and Training 2010 work programme forms the basis for policy cooperation between EU institutions and the Member States and ensures a solid education and training contribution to the Lisbon process. Every two years the Council and the Commission adopt a joint report setting out the progress made as well as the most urgent challenges for the immediate future.

On 12 November 2007 the European Commission adopted its contribution to the 2008 joint progress report which will finally be adopted by the Council in February. The Commission's contribution puts the emphasis on 'Delivering lifelong learning for knowledge, creativity and innovation'

(see COM (2007)703 of 12.11.2007).

It highlights three key areas deserving more attention in the coming years: raising skills levels in the population; effectively implementing lifelong learning strategies; and fully integrating the knowledge triangle of education, research and innovation.

On the first, it is clear that skills levels among the population still needs to be raised. There are too many early school leavers; too few older and low-skilled workers taking part in lifelong learning; and too many people who do not master the key competences needed in today's society. This is an unacceptable waste of human potential. Migrants are a special concern. Even compared with groups with a similar socio-economic status, migrants perform less well than others in most countries. Given our demographic trends, and the demand for high skills, education and training system must pay more attention to the needs of these groups.



Raising skills levels and investing in education systems to become efficient and equitable must therefore remain high on the agenda. Ensuring equity of access, participation, treatment and outcomes must remain a priority. The knowledge of the economic and social impacts of education and training policies must be developed. Particular attention must also be given to high quality teaching. Improving teachers professional preparation and continuing development will improve education and training outcomes.



A detailed statistical analysis supporting these findings can be found in the 2007 report on progress against the set of indicators and benchmarks agreed to monitor progress in the Education and Training 2010 work programme ('Progress towards the Lisbon Objectives in education and training, 2007 – Indicators and benchmarks', SEC (2007)1284). One of the main conclusions of this report is that overall progress in relation to the five agreed benchmarks is clearly insufficient. There has been some progress since 2000, but not sufficient to reach the EU benchmarks by 2010. And in some countries performance has actually worsened between 2000 and 2006.

- There are still too many early school leavers: In 2006, between six and seven million young people (18-24 years old) left education prematurely in the EU. This would need to drop by two million if the benchmark of no more than 10% early school leavers is to be reached.
- More graduates from upper secondary school are needed: In order to achieve the EU benchmark of an 85% upper-secondary school completion rate by 2010, an additional 2 million young people (aged 20-24 years) would need to finish upper-secondary education.
- The EU has succeeded in meeting the target for mathematics, science, and technology graduates: If present trends continue, over 1 million students will graduate in mathematics, science and technology (MST) in the EU in 2010, compared to the present (2005) level of 860 000 graduates per year. These levels already exceed the benchmark.
- There is insufficient participation in lifelong learning activities by adults: An additional 8 million adults would need to participate in lifelong learning within any four week period in 2010 if the EU benchmark of 12.5% participation rate is to be achieved.
- Improvements are needed in literacy levels of fifteen year-olds: About one in every five 15-year-old pupils in the EU is presently a poor reader. To reach the benchmark would need a further 200 000 pupils to improve their standard of reading.

The second main message of the Joint Report relates to lifelong learning strategies. There has been progress here in most countries but not all. Explicit strategies setting out national policy priorities and how different sectors relate to each other were developed by the majority of countries. There are clear advances in pre-primary education, the development of qualifications frameworks, and the validation of non-formal and informal learning. However, the implementation of national lifelong learning strategies is still a challenge in most countries; in particular, the search for innovative learning partnerships and funding mechanisms. Positive trends in public spending on education between 2000 and 2003 seem to have come to a halt. Efforts on improving the levels and efficiency of funding must therefore continue.

The third overall point stressed in the report is the need for a well-functioning knowledge triangle. A better integration of education, research and innovation will be a prime source for boosting growth and jobs in Europe. So it is important to continue modernising higher education, promoting excellence and encouraging university-business partnerships. But in addition, it must be ensured that all education and training sectors, not only higher education, promote creativity and innovation. The knowledge triangle should not be seen only in terms of advanced research; in fact, it is also about a broad skills base in the population. It is about high quality vocational education and training providing the basis for innovation at the work place and it is about schools encouraging creative thinking, learning-to-learn skills and a sense of initiative.

What matters in the knowledge society is what citizens know, and what they can do with their knowledge. This is what makes citizens confident to embrace the challenges of the knowledge age. Raising skills levels, adequate lifelong learning opportunities and room to develop creativity and innovation is what Europeans need.







AMIN MALOUF

Identity, diversity and multilingualism

Amin Maalouf, the Franco-Lebanese writer who chaired the European Commission's group of intellectuals on multilingualism, tells "The Magazine" how he sees the challenges for Europe as it comes to terms with questions of identity, diversity and multilingualism.

What, for you, is linguistic diversity?

Europe's many languages are a reflection of its history. Before they found themselves within the European Union, its populations got to where they are today through different routes and developed specific cultures. This diversity presents a challenge. But in my view it's a healthy challenge, because it obliges us to focus on the elements we need to take account of now as we build Europe: balancing common and local affiliations; managing differences within society - particularly in the light of migration; and more generally, handling the question of identity.

How do you define European identity?

It's always difficult to define an identity, and any attempt is bound to provoke controversy. I'd make just two points. First, an identity based on diversity constitutes a protection against temptations to the fanaticism and exclusion which have marked the history of Europe - and of humanity as a whole. Secondly, the identity of Europe is neither a blank page, nor a page already written and printed; it's a page that is in the process of being written. There is a rich cultural heritage that everyone should feel they have a right to, but it must also remain open to new elements, coming from all corners of the planet.

Just how far should languages be protected in today's Europe and how right is it to try?

The means should be made available to protect and promote all languages. That's a matter of principle. No language should be neglected, or minimised, or marginalised. That requires a new approach to teaching languages, and a new approach to the linguistic relations between the countries of the EU. A reflection group has been studying this question for a long time, and has drawn up precise proposals - which will be published early in 2008.

Do you think multilingualism can actually work?

I'm sure of it. But it will need an inventive approach, and convincing explanations will have to be given to leaders as well as to public opinion. In any case, linguistic diversity is a reality. The question isn't whether we ought to recognise it, but how we should manage it.

LANGUAGES MEAN BUSINESS

Multilingualism can make Europe

More competitive, boosting growth, and creating better jobs.

Harald Hartung and Dorothy Senez review the prospects.

More than two thirds of Europeans learn a foreign language to improve their chances of getting a job - at home or abroad. That's the conclusion of a recent Eurobarometer survey that asked Europeans what motivated them to take on a new language.

Multilingualism is good for individuals - but it's also good for business, as another study carried out for the European Commission in 2007 confirmed. Good when it happens. Bad when it doesn't. Each year, thousands of European companies lose business and miss out on contracts because they don't have the language skills they need, the study found.

The underlying suggestion is that European companies - and smaller firms in particular - could win more exports by investing in more languages. Companies that enhance their language capacities are better equipped for seizing opportunities in a multilingual world.

In Europe alone, which nearly half a billion people make the world's largest market, dozens of languages are commonly spoken - so the chances of making a sale are obviously increased if the message gets through in more than one of them. Across the world, with its hundreds of languages in current use, the argument is all the stronger for stretching out to speak to people in ways they can understand. But the study revealed that 11% of the companies surveyed just didn't have the know-how and the resources to put language strategies in place.

The gap was particularly evident for smaller firms, many of which encountered major difficulties in communicating across languages. This is a serious challenge. Europe's 23 million small and medium-sized enterprises provide 67% of total private employment, which corresponds to some 75 million jobs. In 2004 their share of the total turnover of companies in EU-25 was almost 59%. Clearly, even a marginal improvement in export performance would have a huge impact on growth and jobs across the European Union

Making the effort to integrate multilingualism pays dividends. The study shows that companies with a strategic approach to multilingual communication are able to boost their export sales by more than 40% compared to their competitors with no formal language strategies.

Some companies are reluctant to invest in language training, because they assume that English is enough for international business. It is a risky assumption. English may be currently in the top position as the "lingua franca" for international business, but demand for other languages is increasing. While a quarter of the companies surveyed felt that they still needed to improve their English, just as many felt the need to expand into German or French, with Spanish and Russian also featuring prominently in the ranking. Many companies - particularly larger ones - also stressed their need for non-European languages such as Chinese, Arabic and Urdu, as they seek to expand into non-European markets.

It is not just for marketing and export drives that businesses need language strategies. They are relevant for communication inside as well as outside a company. Greater mobility and diversity in society mean that the workforces of many companies nowadays routinely comprise people from a wide range of national and language backgrounds. This creates an obvious need for providing a multicultural workforce with adequate training in the language of their company.



Diverse workforces bring with them a huge opportunity too. Imaginative companies can benefit from tapping into the language resources that exist in a multicultural workforce. Migrants bring with them the riches of their cultures and their languages. When these are valued as resources and put to good use, companies acquire new assets, and employees develop new skills and confidence.

A conference organised by the Commission in September 2007 underlined this point. The conclusions - endorsed by companies of all sizes, as well as trade organisations, chambers of commerce, policy makers and language professionals - stressed the urgent need for additional language skills and intercultural sensitivity. Together, this combination can provide a company with a competitive edge.

It was at the same conference that a new Business Forum on Multilingualism was launched. Chaired by Viscount Etienne Davignon, this brings together a select group of European managers convinced of the role of multilingualism in maximising business results. All the members of the forum have a professional interest in the issues, and personal experience in how linguistic competences can make a difference to companies' development prospects on world markets. These directors, CEOs or Human Resources managers from renowned international corporations and from small and medium-sized companies are all committed to assisting the European Commission in boosting awareness of the economic benefits of multilingualism.

Modern society is built around communication. Languages should be bridges that give people the means to communicate and to understand each other's cultures - not barriers to impede contact. Today's Europe of 27 is a multicultural, diverse enterprise - the result of enlargements, the single market, easier movement between countries, migration and globalisation. In this culturally and linguistically diverse landscape, multilingualism is not a burden, it is a definite asset.

Education systems can provide our young people with the language skills to make the best of the employment and trade opportunities that Europe offers, and beyond formal education, lifelong language learning has a role to play too. Multilingualism makes for better lives and for better business. With multilingualism playing its full part, European businesses can become more competitive, European workers more employable, and European life more convivial.

ERASMUS MUNDUS

European higher education aims even higher in 2008

2008 is a big year for Erasmus Mundus, the EU programme that has been boosting the international reputation of European higher education since 2004. Not only is the first phase of the programme coming up to completion. The year should also see the final design emerge for a second phase. And this is intended to ensure even greater impact for the programme in the increasingly competitive international marketplace for higher education.

Within the EU, the programme aims to enhance the quality of higher education and to strengthen academic co-operation, creating a network of mobile students and scholars. At world level, the programme has complementary functions: it displays the competitiveness and attractiveness of European higher education, and it promotes sustainable development of higher education in non-EU countries and intercultural dialogue.

Its top-quality Masters courses, the flagship product of Erasmus Mundus, have established a deserved reputation for academic excellence. To date it has funded 103 of them, each subject to highly competitive selection procedures.

Erasmus Mundus Masters courses have so far covered: animal breeding, coastal management, earthquake engineering, food science, genetics, geospatial technologies, nanotechnology, photonics, public health, robotics, rural development, space technology, sustainable forestry, tropical medicine and viticulture.

Nearly three hundred European universities are benefiting from hosting outstanding students and scholars from across the globe. By the end of the first phase of the programme, over eight thousand students and teachers, from Europe and beyond, will have received grants to take part in the programme. This enables European institutions to broaden their knowledge base and to develop new academic links overseas.

Members of the Erasmus Mundus Alumni and Students Association are providing support to current Erasmus Mundus students, and are also spreading the word about the programme among prospective applicants and institutions in their home countries, establishing national "chapters" of Erasmus Mundus alumni. This recently-launched association already numbers thousands of graduates of Erasmus Mundus Masters Courses from over 100 countries, and is placing emphasis on strengthening links with industry.

The new phase of Erasmus Mundus will run from 2009 to 2013. The Commission's July 2007 proposal is currently making its way through the Council and the European Parliament. Negotiations have been positively concluded with the Council, and there is a constructive atmosphere within the Parliament, so adoption is envisaged by autumn this year. The new programme is designed to preserve the original spirit of Erasmus Mundus, and to help close crucial knowledge gaps with EU competitor countries. But it will have a wider scope and geographical reach, to adapt to the changing realities of the worldwide market for higher education.



The aims of the new programme

In line with priorities identified during stakeholder consultation, the proposal for the second phase envisages: joint degree programmes to doctorate level;

full-study scholarships to allow greater access to EU students and scholars;

participation of third-country higher education institutions in joint degree courses from their inception;

enhanced mobility and co-operation between European and third-country higher education institutions;

stronger links with the labour market to ensure employability of Erasmus Mundus graduates; promotion of research and innovation.

To match the ambitious targets of this second phase, the funding has been quadrupled to almost €1 billion over five years.

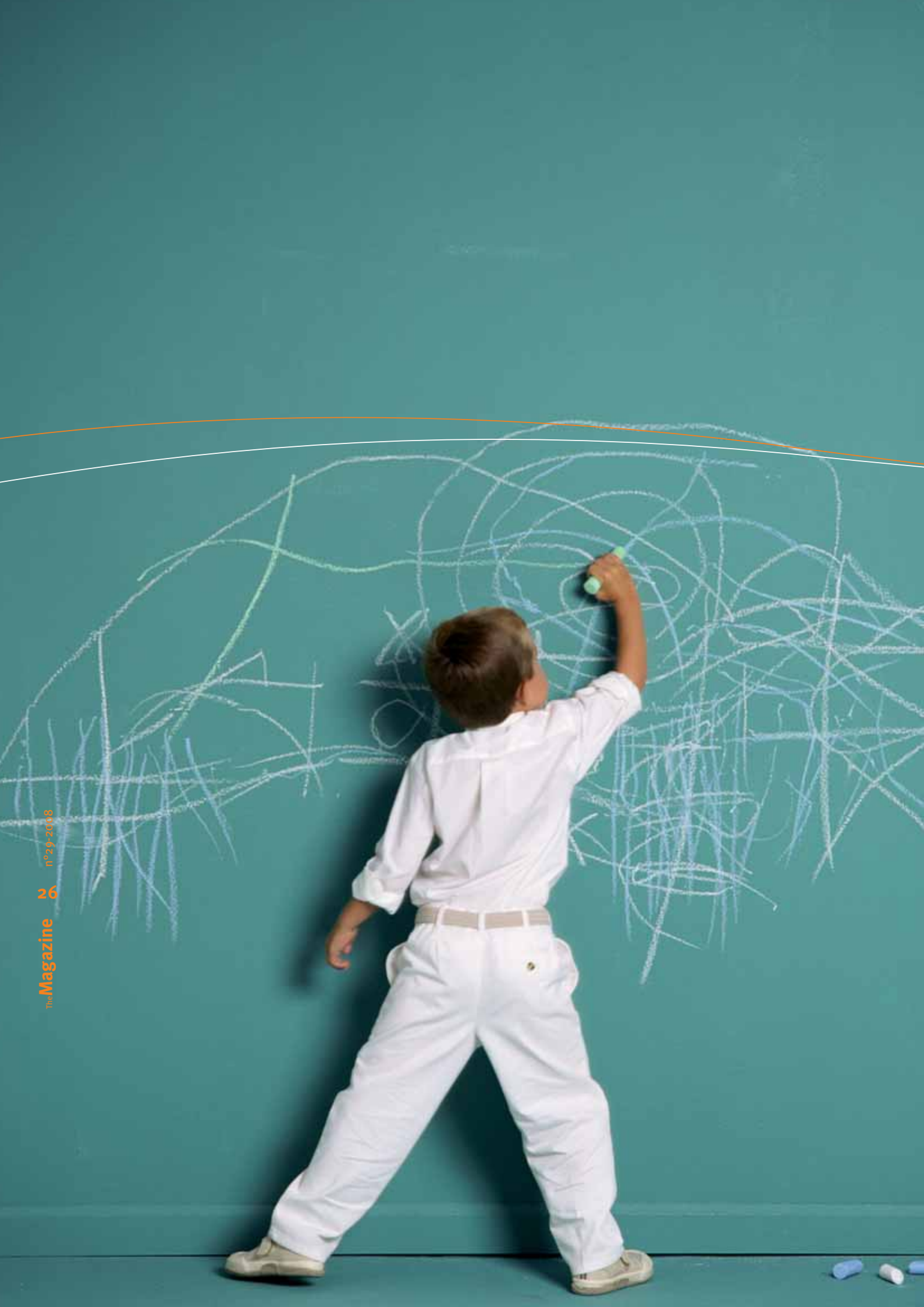
€ 490 million will be allocated to maintaining the original Erasmus Mundus Masters courses, with excellence remaining an absolute precondition for participation, and with qualifying third-country higher education institutions allowed to become full members, rather than just partners. Up to 35 joint doctorate programmes will also be funded, to boost co-operation between higher education institutions at research level, and to increase investment in research and innovation, as a contribution towards the development of the European Research Area. Part of this funding will also be used to enhance the attractiveness of Europe as an education destination, and to support initiatives in crucial areas such as quality assurance, recognition of qualifications and credit transfer.

€ 460 million will support mobility partnerships between EU and third-country higher education institutions at all levels, permitting participants to spend a period of study or research in the EU before returning to their home country - to avoid any brain drain. Both the EU and third countries will benefit from the academic dialogue and transfer of know-how resulting.

Quality and the perception of Erasmus Mundus as a guarantee of excellence are essential to the success of the programme. Continuous project monitoring, alongside a series of evaluation exercises, have already been planned and will be a prominent feature of the second phase. By ensuring the highest levels of credibility and recognition, Erasmus Mundus will be in a position significantly to assist progress towards the European Higher Education Area.

For more information on the Erasmus Mundus programme, go to :

🔗 <http://ec.europa.eu/erasmus-mundus>





IT'S OFFICIAL:

“Culture matters for the European project”

2008 is the first year of the newly-agreed European Agenda for Culture. The European Council's endorsement of this agenda at the end of 2007 marked a historic breakthrough - the first time that all the member states at top political level have explicitly recognised the importance of culture as a central aspect of the European Union. Xavier Troussard looks at what it means for Europe, now, and in the future.

European construction: a cultural project

The close link between culture and the European project has repeatedly been underlined by the European Commission, and particularly by Commission President José Manuel Barroso. And from the outset, this extraordinary adventure of constructing Europe has been an eminently cultural project. It has been a bringing together of people from across a continent deeply scarred by devastating conflicts, and the forging of mutual understanding that respected distinct traditions and approaches and at the same time acknowledged a common heritage.

Today more than ever, the cultural aspect has to be taken into account. As debate rages over the future of the EU, or enlargement, or how a knowledge economy can secure the benefits of globalisation and sustainable development, culture is always at the centre of discussions, as an integral aspect of the economic, social and political stakes in European construction.

Top-level recognition of the cultural stakes

This growing recognition of the central significance of culture was what lay behind the Commission's Communication for a European Agenda for Culture in a Globalizing World, adopted in May last year¹. And this agenda has now received the endorsement of the member states at the highest political level, since the European Council itself, in its December conclusions, recognised the relevance and importance of this agenda in “increasing coherence and visibility of the EU's action in this field, while maximising the potential of cultural and creative industries especially as far as SMEs are concerned, therefore contributing to the aims of the Lisbon Agenda”. A first!

As Ján Figel¹, European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth, comments: “This marks the start of a new era for culture in Europe. By bringing together our efforts at European, national, regional and local level, we will be better able to meet the major challenges that the cultural sector faces.”

¹ OJ C 381 of 3.8.2007, COM(2007) 242 final.



An ambitious agenda for culture and for citizens

It is easy to identify this agenda's innovative elements for the cultural sector. For the first time, at European level, a policy document has defined three major objectives for all interested parties to work together on:

- 1) promoting intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity,
- 2) reinforcing culture's capacity to stimulate creativity and innovation, and
- 3) recognising culture as an important element of the EU's external relations.

These are shared objectives, so every player – EU institutions, member states, local and regional communities, and representatives of the cultural sector and of civil society – should work at their own level towards them with a view to achieving tangible results in the medium term. To do this, the member states have expressed their wish to work within the open method of coordination - the method employed in matters where the EU has limited competence, but which are vital for our common future. The method allows exchanges of good practices, learning from one another so as to develop effective strategies at all levels of governance.

There are five priority areas chosen by the Council for 2008-2010 on the basis of the Commission's proposal²:

- encouraging the mobility of artists and other professionals in the culture field,
- favouring access to culture, notably by promoting cultural heritage, cultural tourism, multilingualism, digitisation, synergies between culture and education, and facilitating the mobility of collections
- refining data, statistics and methodologies in the cultural domain, and improving their comparability
- promoting the development of cultural and creative industries and maximizing their potential, in particular for SMEs,
- promoting the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions and contributing to its implementation at international level,

Giving culture a bigger voice in European affairs

To ensure that everyone's efforts converge in the same direction, the cultural sector has to be more closely associated with the major European issues. This is why the Agenda, drawn up in the wake of an extensive consultation of civil society, proposed bringing all aspects of this multi-faceted sector together in a wide-ranging Cultural Forum.

The first Forum took place in Lisbon last September, under the Portuguese Presidency. It was the occasion for representatives of the sector to react to the Commission proposals, and to support its ambition to take greater account of culture. The objective now is to transform this pilot exercise into a permanent dialogue, so that the sector becomes a real agent for change. In the months to come, one of the challenges will be to develop the Forum into a flexible and efficient process for partnership, with regular discussions feeding into the decision-making process, as well as allowing exchanges of good practice.

Within the Commission itself, this Agenda has created the basis for taking account of culture more effectively in all EU programmes and policies. The creation of an inter-service group on culture is making it possible to intensify this work. Now it is up to member states and regional and local authorities to do the same at their level.

2008 - a decisive year

2008 is the first year that the Agenda is in operation. It is a major milestone for everyone involved in the process. The ball is in everyone's court! Everyone should work together to ensure the flowering of the extraordinarily rich common cultural heritage of our continent, and to promote its unequalled cultural and linguistic diversity as a way of generating greater understanding among its peoples and a greater openness to others.



SEVEN **flagship projects**

1. DIVERSIDAD

PROMOTING DIALOGUE AND EXCHANGE THROUGH EUROPEAN URBAN CULTURE

Urban culture and hip-hop providing the framework for promoting long-term intercultural dialogue through artistic events and discussion panels - in Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Romania, Spain, and the United Kingdom. Organised by the European Music Office.

2. ALTER EGO

Getting young people to reach beyond their customary social circles through collaborative art projects - in Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, Slovenia and the United Kingdom. Organised by the European Union National Institutes for Culture

3. CULTURES FROM AROUND THE BLOCK:

CREATING A EUROPEAN NETWORK FOR INTERCULTURAL COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Combating social exclusion and cultural alienation, through activities in the local community, exchanging information and experiences among grass-root organisations across eight intercultural neighbourhoods in Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, and the United Kingdom. Organised by MKC Praha.

4. INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE RADIO CAMPAIGN

Promoting intercultural dialogue through a radio campaign involving five local radio stations and two production centres through a European network running local campaigns in Austria, Hungary, Slovenia, Ireland, Italy, Spain, and France. Organised by Radio Popolare.

5. “ I = YOU ”

“ I = YOU – TON MONDE EST LE MIEN “

Story tellers, visual artists and musicians will be sharing a common imaginary world with primary-school children to promote and encourage intercultural dialogue in Belgium, Germany, France, Hungary, Italy, United Kingdom and Portugal. Organised by the International Yehudi Menuhin Foundation.

6. BABELMED

REACHING ACROSS BORDERS, IDENTITIES AND CULTURES IN EUROPE

Cultural expressions and artistic creations reflecting the experience of immigrants will promote intercultural dialogue, mutual understanding, and awareness of the benefits of multiculturalism, particularly among young people, in Belgium, Germany, France, Italy, and Spain. Organised by Associazione culturale Babelmed.

7. STRANGER

Youth videos developed by communities in 18 EU Member States are at the heart of this project in Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Organised by the European Cultural Foundation.







TOGETHER IN DIVERSITY

towards a new intercultural perspective in Europe

2008 is the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, and it received a high-profile launch in Ljubljana with European Commission President José Manuel Barroso, Education and Culture Commissioner Jan Figel', and the Slovenian Presidency - fittingly, the first of the EU's new member states to hold the rotating EU Presidency.

Central to the occasion were civil society stakeholders from across the continent, since this year's contribution to an emerging European strategy for intercultural dialogue depends crucially on the engagement of civil society.

Throughout 2008, a programme of debates and projects is planned to strengthen and deepen a new intercultural perspective in Europe. Intercultural dialogue is at the heart of this programme, as the key mechanism to promote mutual understanding and the capacity for people from widely differing backgrounds to live comfortably together. The programme will explore the benefits of cultural diversity, and foster a sense of European belonging and active European citizenship.

An idea becomes reality

Since the concept was first proposed by Commissioner Figel' in 2004, EYID has matured into a wide-scale initiative in awareness-raising that could help change attitudes and behaviour across the continent. A €10 million budget has been allocated for projects and activities at European and national level, and for a pan-European communication campaign focusing on youth, and based on partnerships with civil society and the media.

The official website of the Year, www.dialogue2008.eu, is itself the result of a comprehensive consultation with civil society partners throughout 2007. It includes a special partner section, which allows individuals and organisations working with intercultural issues to make contact with one another

and to share best practices across Europe. More than 650 stakeholders have already uploaded profiles, and the total is continually rising.

European Ambassadors for Intercultural Dialogue

Congo-born French rap singer Adb Al Malik, Marjane Satrapi from Iran, and Brazilian novelist Paulo Coelho are among those playing an active role in EYID. Altogether, fifteen high profile artists from the fields of music, cinema and literature have been nominated European Ambassadors of Intercultural Dialogue. They have been chosen because each has direct personal experience of living and working across different cultures. Together, the ambassadors represent a joint expression of the benefits of diversity.

"In these difficult and dangerous moments for the world, culture is the basis for establishing a dialogue", according to Paulo Coelho. "If we take culture as a basis we have nothing to lose. Culture can establish dialogue. And if we establish a dialogue, we still have one bridge left."

During 2008, seven Brussels debates will aim at building such bridges, feeding the emerging policy process and focusing thematically on different aspects of intercultural dialogue, including religion, arts and heritage, the media, and the workplace



Feeding the policy process

The Year 2008 holds the key to a sustainable European strategy for intercultural dialogue. Such a strategy, however, needs to be based on careful studies, listening and structured discussions with stakeholders and the European public at large.

This intercultural discussion took off at a January seminar in Ljubljana, just prior to the official opening of EYID. The Commission presented an independent study on national approaches to intercultural dialogue, covering education, youth and culture across the EU, EFTA and candidate countries. Education, the study concluded, is a vital factor in developing intercultural competences, providing a basis for understanding and respect for diversity.

This educational focus was shared by the Council of Europe, in a White Paper it presented at the seminar, which stressed the need for public authorities and all education providers to *“make the development of intercultural dialogue and understanding a main objective of education at all levels”*

The Civil Society Platform for Intercultural Dialogue also helped set the intercultural agenda with a draft of its “Rainbow Paper” on intercultural dialogue, drawn up through online consultation during 2007. This recommends examining intercultural dialogue in its distinct sectors - education, religion, the arts and heritage - by bringing in ‘outsiders’ from other sectors. An artist might give feedback on different educational approaches, for instance, whilst a teacher might consider inter-religion issues, bringing a trans-sectoral dimension to intercultural dialogue.

The Brussels debates

Throughout 2008, seven thematic Brussels debates on intercultural dialogue will carry the Ljubljana discussions further, helping establish a new intercultural perspective and increased societal cohesion for Europe beyond the Year.¹ According to Commissioner Figel: *“Europe clearly faces significant challenges that have their roots in intercultural relations. Therefore, we can and should face up to the challenges of our continent’s cultural and religious mix.”* Strong involvement of all stakeholders, including Members of the European Parliament, is necessary to make progress with an ambitious agenda that can respond to Europe’s intercultural challenges. And this is progress that Europeans demand. A Eurobarometer survey on EYID showed that almost two-thirds of citizens in Europe want the EU to act on intercultural dialogue. It also revealed that almost three-quarters of EU citizens believe that people with a different ethnic, religious or national background enrich the cultural life of their country.

¹ See separate box outlining Brussels debates

Changes at local level across Europe

Radio, video, graffiti, and story telling are among the innovative formats that have been selected as European flagships for the Year 2008 for intercultural dialogue at local level. Seven projects, relating to youth, sport, education, arts, social cohesion, media, and immigration², were chosen from amongst some 300 responses to a call from the Commission. The flagships are the follow-up to a Commission conference on “Intercultural dialogue – best practices at community level” held at the Committee of the Regions in 2006.

Support from EU programmes

The seven European flagship projects are complemented in each Member State by national projects, selected by the national coordination bodies established for EYID. Intercultural dialogue has also been systematically introduced as an objective in all DG EAC programmes, with the result that intercultural elements are now firmly embedded within many of the projects supported under the Citizenship, Education and Culture programmes. Out of 1125 projects supported under the Citizenship programme, some 718, or 65 percent, have intercultural dialogue as a key priority.

Erasmus Mundus, which aims to *“promote dialogue and understanding between peoples and cultures”* through grants facilitating student exchange between the EU and the rest of the world, also backed this intercultural objective with €45 million. And within the Culture programme, more than €3 million (28 percent) is allocated in 2007 alone to projects fostering intercultural dialogue, and €9 million (50 percent) is allocated to multi-annual projects that deploy culture and the arts in promoting intercultural dialogue.

The Jean Monnet, Youth in Action and Leonardo da Vinci programmes have also actively supported projects with key intercultural dialogue elements. Altogether, by mainstreaming intercultural dialogue in its programmes, DG EAC has been able to more than double the effective support for intercultural dialogue during EYID.

Intercultural dialogue is also being supported through projects and programmes in other DGs, particularly DG Justice, Freedom and Security, DG Research, DG Information, Society and Media, and the RELEX family.

A comprehensive funding guide has been prepared by DG EAC as part of the Year 2008, and is available via the website:

➤ www.dialogue2008.eu.

² See separate box outlining the seven flagship projects



Conclusion

Projects, debates, events and initiatives of the Year 2008 all carry a new agenda for intercultural dialogue, heralding the emergence of a European perspective on the issue.

Indeed, the Year 2008 aims at shaping politics for society by society. This is why partnerships with civil society and the media have been paramount in the Year's preparatory process.

Whilst the Year is a concrete endeavour, including active project support through European and national projects, and through the mobilization of other community instruments for intercultural dialogue, it is not an end in itself.

It is only a beginning. Beyond 2008 lie the future, and within it lies a perspective for a sustainable strategy for intercultural dialogue both within and outside the European Union.

Quotes:

"We will work to promote healthier atmospheres in which all get to know each other. Communication is the most important thing in the world."

Fazil Say

"Intercultural goals are for me actually European goals."

"Love – vlaska!"

Jack Martin Händler

"A dialogue is not me imposing my ideas on you, it is both of us sharing different ideas, but understanding that between the different ideas there are common values."

Paulo Coelho

"Europe has to be able to find a way to be all together."

Jordi Savall

"Culture defines Europe much more than business or geography. We should live together. Not only exist."

Jan Figel'



Intercultural dialogue comes to town

The Brussels Debates

Seven debates on intercultural dialogue issues will be held in Brussels during 2008, ranging from interfaith dialogue to multilingualism and the role of the media. The aim is to provide a platform for reflection and exchange of ideas as a contribution to policy discussion on intercultural dialogue.

Each one-hour debate will feature an introduction from high-level speakers and a question and comment session with the audience, followed by a reception to allow for further informal discussions.

The debates will be chaired by Brussels-based journalist Shada Islam, a specialist in EU foreign and development policies as well as immigration and anti-discrimination issues. She writes for the German news agency dpa, and for Asian, African and Middle East newspapers and magazines. She is also a regular contributor to the BBC, The Bulletin and E!Sharp.

All debates will be reported on the official website of the EYID:

🌐 www.dialogue2008.eu.

The Brussels Debates are intended above all for Members of the European Parliament, Commissioners, journalists, and for civil society stakeholders, who will receive direct invitations. However, places will also be available for the public, in particular students, by online registration.

The debates will take place at the Residence Palace in Brussels on the following dates. The topics may be subject to change, so check www.dialogue2008.eu for the latest update:

BRUSSELS DEBATE 1 : 5 March 2008

Topic: Integrating conversations:

The impact of Migration on Intercultural Dialogue

BRUSSELS DEBATE 2 : 2 April 2008

Topic: Arts & culture

"Negotiating differences.

A responsibility of artists and cultural institutions"

BRUSSELS DEBATE 3 : 14 May 2008

Topic: Interreligious Dialogue

BRUSSELS DEBATE 4 : 4 June 2008

Topic: Workplace

BRUSSELS DEBATE 5 : 10 September 2008

Topic: Multilingualism

BRUSSELS DEBATE 6 : 1 October 2008

Topic: Education

BRUSSELS DEBATE 7 : 5 November 2008

Topic: Media

GOLDEN STARS

Golden Stars for top European performers

Local action by citizens on human rights, religious tolerance, and energy conservation were among the projects rewarded with European Union Golden Stars in 2007. This novel honour was also won by projects promoting local involvement in EU enlargement, European values, and cross-border friendships.

Golden Stars is part of the new Europe for Citizens programme, with its wide toolbox of opportunities for encouraging Europeans to come closer together, and for promoting active European citizenship. The programme supports projects submitted by local people involved in town-twinning or by civil society organisations. Projects are selected on the basis of their potential to translate EU-level political objectives into the local context. Each year ten projects are selected by a high-level jury to receive the Golden Stars Award, celebrating achievements within the areas of town-twinning and civil society.

These citizen initiatives contribute to a sharing of unique experiences, the creation of new friendships that span Europe, and the emergence of a sense of belonging to a European family united around common values such as tolerance, equal opportunities and democratic dialogue.



The winning projects in 2007 ...

Civil society projects

- European Forum - Learning in immigrant societies: for human rights-oriented democracy in Europe (*Netzwerk Migration Europa, DE*)
- How to become an active European citizen? (*Centrum pro komunitni praci stredni Morava, CZ*)
- Communicating EU values across Greece (*Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy, GR*)
- The Baltic Adventure! Youth travelling along the roads of enlargement (*Europahuset Gävleborg, SE*)
- Overcoming irritations and prejudices between people of different cultures, religions and convictions in the EU enlargement process (*United Religions Initiative Europe AISBL, DE*)

Town-Twinning projects

- Conservation of energy and natural resources (*Nether, UK*)
- "Enfants du Pays, parents de l'Europe" une même citoyenneté malgré la diversité des origines (*Le Coudray St Germer, France*)
- Citizens Together – Without Borders (*Tekovske Luzany, Slovakia*)
- Europe Week (*Hennef, Germany*)
- The days of Europe 2006 – Solidarity in Europe, hundreds of ideas, thousands of friendship" (*Wagrowiec, Poland*)



Selection process for the Golden Stars

The jury for the 2007 selection was chaired by MEP Hannu Takkula. The other members were António Paiva of the Committee of the Regions, Brenda King of the Economic and Social Committee, Benoit Derenne, Director of the Future Generations Foundation, Eva Kavkova, on behalf of 2006 Golden Stars Award project, and David Farge, representing the European Council of Municipalities and Regions.

The criteria for the assessment related not only to the overall quality of the projects, but also to how far they promoted active European citizenship, especially in terms of inter-cultural dialogue, new forms of citizens' participation, and equal opportunities for all. The jury also took account of the diversity of projects and activities undertaken. Projects celebrating Europe Day and projects with a strong cross-fertilisation between the different actions of the programme were also given special attention.

Since 2006, the award is made at a major Golden Stars Ceremony, which has become a landmark event for local and European civil society actors as a recognition of their efforts. The ceremony also throws a valuable spotlight on EU activities in civil society development.

The Golden Stars Award Ceremony takes place during the annual Active European Citizenship Forum, which provides a unique opportunity for debate, dialogue and exchange of opinions among the participants. The main theme of the 2007 Forum was inter-cultural dialogue, attracting local politicians such as the mayor of Saint Josse, one of the most diverse boroughs in Brussels – as well as civil society activists and representatives of EU institutions.

The discussions focused on the neighbourhood perspective, and on how local communities can be enriched by the ethnic, religious, social and cultural diversity so characteristic of many localities around Europe. Associations and municipalities offered concrete examples of their engagement in community life at the local level, challenging the frequent criticism that Europe is merely a technocratic centralised undertaking. Most speakers and participants shared the view that a collective political conscience exists in Europe, whose common denominator is a sense of identity arising from cross-border co-operation. In this context, each individual project makes an important contribution to the future of Europe, bringing together people across Europe and focusing on issues of European relevance.

TIME FOR TEAM WORK

The White Paper on Sport

The EU has picked up the ball pretty smartly since the European Commission adopted its White Paper on Sport last July. As the last issue of The Magazine pointed out, the Commission's initiative highlighted how sport can help meet the challenges the EU is facing in health, education, social integration and economic development. What has happened since then has shown how good the results can be when everyone on the team plays together.

The Education and Culture DG moved swiftly to explain the implications of the White Paper's global strategic vision for sport in Europe. It has also worked with its partners on making an early reality of the White Paper's Action Plan - which is named the *Pierre de Coubertin* plan in honour of the Frenchman who founded the International Olympic Committee.

The Commission held a conference with European sports organisations in Brussels last October which allowed them to present their views - and at the same time confirmed the diversity of sport in Europe, and the sector's desire for recognition of its autonomy and its specific character. Most of the participants welcomed the White Paper and indicated their readiness to cooperate with the Commission in putting the Action Plan into effect.

Shortly afterwards, EU Sports Ministers, meeting in Lisbon in late October, expressed the same willingness to take part in the Action Plan. Meanwhile, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions have all started to prepare their opinions, which are likely to be finalised by mid-2008. The Commission also created an inter-service group on sport, bringing together the relevant DGs under the chairmanship of DG Education and Culture.

Some of the Action Plan activities have already kicked off. Appropriately enough, one of the first to be initiated was the creation of a group of independent experts on physical activity, who held an inaugural meeting in December and have now started drafting physical activity guidelines as foreseen in the Action Plan. Their energetic work-schedule envisages completion of the task before the end of 2008.

"A major role to play"

Another example was the high-level conference on violence in sport at the end of last November, in which European Commission Vice-President Franco Frattini and Commissioner Ján Figel' were joined by UEFA president Michel Platini. From this forum, the Commission and the European football authorities sent out a clear message of determination to combat this plague, which detracts from the values of the sport, and even represents a threat to the security of European citizens. As Vice-President Frattini said: "*The Commission has a major role to play in facilitating the active involvement of law enforcement services, judicial authorities, sports federations, supporters organisations and other stakeholders, so that ultimately we can all enjoy sport peacefully.*"



The EU's development cooperation dimension has also been involved. The Commission took part in a United Nations-backed working group on sport in the service of development and peace. In the economic domain too, work has been going ahead. Member state experts, meeting as a working group chaired by the Commission, agreed in October on a common statistical definition for sport - a technical advance which will allow better EU-level comparability of economic data on sport, and will provide sport policy with a much firmer base of objective and measurable statistics.

Another example of tangible progress with the Action Plan is the Commission's ambition to relaunch the European Sport Forum under the French Presidency, in Biarritz in November. European sport is also one of the winners from the signature last December of the Lisbon Treaty. This will bring sport squarely into the area of EU policy. It is one of the very few new policy areas that will be brought into Community competence for supporting, coordinating or supplementing member state actions once the Treaty is ratified.

With this new legal status for sport in the EU, the prospects for the White Paper are even better. It should be possible to prepare for the implementation of a real EU policy on sport that respects the member states' competences and the autonomy of sports organisations. While it is still too early to predict the full impact of these new arrangements, the early benefits will include better coordination of the work of EU Sports Ministers, greater attention to sport in EU policy-making and actions, and the possibility of establishing an EU programme for sport.



White Paper on Sport
available at this address:
➤ <http://ec.europa.eu/sport>

ANOTHER 50TH ANNIVERSARY

The Commission Library

Following last year's anniversary celebrations of the signature of the Treaties of Rome in 1957, this year sees the 50th anniversary of one of the key repositories of all that has happened in the European Union since then. The European Commission's Central Library - part of the Directorate-General for Education and Culture - is this year marking fifty years since its foundation.

As the European project has developed, so have the Library's collections, which represent a unique source of information on European integration. The variety of subjects covered reflects the role which the EU has gradually come to assume in the world today. The collections track the entire post-World War II period, comprising almost all official EU publications, significant EU documents and the EU Official Journal in all its languages. They comprise not only books (of which there are more than 500,000), but also reference works, magazines and newspapers. Through the Library, the Commission subscribes to more than 2,000 periodicals.

With successive enlargements and the growing interest of non-EU countries in EU affairs, the languages represented in the collections have also diversified.

The Library has kept up with technological change too. An ever-growing number of documents listed in ECLAS, the Library's online catalogue (<http://ec.europa.eu/eclas>), are available in electronic format - making many EU documents available to external readers too. Long gone are the days of card catalogues - today readers can search the collections from their desktop, using the online ECLAS library catalogue.

And via the interlibrary loan system, many recognised libraries and documentation centres - not only in the Member States but also throughout the world - can arrange to borrow works or copies of articles from the collections

► http://ec.europa.eu/libraries/doc/centrallibrary/serviceb_en.htm#loans

In addition, the Library's services are not limited to carrying out searches. Readers can also set up alerts in order to be regularly informed about new works in their field of interest.

The Central Library, which also has a branch in Luxembourg, is situated in the heart of the European district of Brussels, within easy reach of the major EU institutions. The Library is open to visitors every day (please consult the website for details when planning your visit). The reading room offers a wide range of newspapers from all the Member States, as well as a selection of periodicals and reference books. You are welcome to visit us, in person or on-line!

ECLAS, the Central Library's online catalogue:
► <http://ec.europa.eu/eclas/>

The Central Library website:
► http://ec.europa.eu/libraries/doc/index_en.htm



LAST NEWS

10 April 2008 Adoption of the ECVET proposal

The first step towards a Europe-wide credit system in vocational education and training, called ECVET, was taken when the European Commission adopted a draft recommendation to make it easier for citizens to get formal recognition of knowledge, skills and competences they have gained in another country. Member States are encouraged to sign up to this voluntary scheme that does not seek to replace national systems but rather facilitate transfers between them. ECVET is fully compatible with both the European credit system in higher education and national systems in vocational education and training. The proposal was submitted for approval to the European Parliament and the Council. Member States can eventually adopt it on a voluntary basis and implement it in keeping with their own rules.

2 April 2008 EYID Brussels debates well underway

The series of "Brussels debates", which is the backbone of the "centralised" events of the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue, got well under way in the Spring. The first debate on the 11th of March brought together the vice-president of the Commission Franco Frattini and German MEP of Turkish origin, Cem Ozdemir, who had a lively discussion with Bashy Quarishy and Joris Rijbroek, as well as with the public. The second debate concentrated on cultural exchanges and brought together, among others, the Commissioner Jan Figel and the French MEP Claire Gibault, a well-known orchestra conductor. The discussion with the audience concentrated on the role of culture as a vehicle of exchange, but also of expressing people's identity. The May debate will focus on inter-religious dialogue.

31 March 2008 Commission proposes naming 2009 Year of Creativity and Innovation

After the current European Year of Intercultural Dialogue the Commission has proposed that 2009 be declared the European Year of Creativity and Innovation. The aim is to attract attention to some of the greatest challenges for Europe in a global environment and to look for solutions, which often reside in creative and innovative approaches in all sectors of human activity. The modern world puts emphasis on better use of knowledge and rapid innovation; it therefore requires a broadening of the creative skills base involving the whole population. In particular, there is a need for skills and competences that enable people to embrace change as an opportunity and to be open to new ideas in an increasingly culturally diverse, knowledge-based society. The proposal has been sent to the Council and the European Parliament.



3-4 March 2008 Conference 'Participation of young people with fewer opportunities'

On 3-4 March, the European Commission organised a conference in Brussels on the 'Participation of young people with fewer opportunities'. It was the first European event focusing on the category of socio-economically deprived young people in Europe. The conference highlighted innovative ways to encourage the participation of marginalized young people in society and identified key factors for success in projects working in this area. More than 150 participants came from all over Europe, including representatives of 23 umbrella NGOs and national or local NGOs from all Member States, youth workers and policy-makers.

18 February 2008 First EU forecast on future needs for skills

The demand for skills and qualifications is being driven upwards in most occupations, including in so-called elementary jobs, by the continuing rise of the service sector and sweeping technological and organisational changes. This is the main finding of the study "Future skill needs in Europe: medium-term forecast" prepared by CEDEFOP, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. It forecasts that between 2006 and 2015 Europe will gain 12.5 million additional jobs at the highest qualification level and 9.5 million at the medium level (especially vocational qualifications). But jobs for workers with low qualifications will decline by 8.5 million. Even jobs for unskilled manual workers are demanding more qualifications, while skilled manual workers will increasingly need medium-level qualifications. This has serious implications for employment. A shrinking population implies a continuing need to replace workers, even in declining sectors and occupations. But with skill requirements increasing dramatically, new workers will need higher qualifications to perform "the same job".



27 January 2008 EUROPEAN BORDER BREAKERS AWARDS 2008

On 27 January fifth annual edition of the European Border Breakers Awards (EBBAs), rewarding artist who achieved the best continental export sales with a debut album in 2007 took place during the MIDEM – world's music fairs in Cannes (France). The awards were given by Ján Figel, the European Commissioner responsible for Education, Training, Culture and Youth. The EBBA events in Cannes included also an informal meeting between the EU's Ministers of Culture and representatives of the European music industry, to discuss the challenges facing the European music industry. The European Commission prepared a special stand dedicated to a music sector and the Culture Programme 2007-2013

**Directorate-General for Education and Culture:**

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/index_en.html

**Education & Training:**

<http://ec.europa.eu/education>

EIT:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/educ/eit/index_en.html

Erasmus:

<http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/llp/erasmus>

Erasmus Mundus:

<http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/mundus>

**Culture:**

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/eac/index_en.html

**Culture portal:**

http://ec.europa.eu/culture/portal/index_en.htm

**European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008:**

<http://www.interculturaldialogue2008.eu/>

**Multilingualism:**

<http://ec.europa.eu/languages>

**Sport:**

<http://ec.europa.eu/sport>

**Citizenship:**

<http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship>

**Youth:**

<http://ec.europa.eu/youth>

**Youth portal:**

<http://europa.eu/youth/>

Subscribe to The Magazine

The Magazine provides a periodical survey of education and culture issues in Europe with in-depth articles and reports on EU policies in the fields of education, training, youth, culture, languages, sport and civil society.

It is available in German, English, Spanish, French, Italian and Polish.

To subscribe see:

• http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/mag_en.html

Do you need further copies of *The Magazine*?

Order them from eac-info@ec.europa.eu

© European Communities, 2008