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Proposal for a

DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

**adopting a multi-annual programme (2004-2006) for the effective integration of
Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in education and training systems
in Europe (eLearning Programme)**

(presented by the Commission)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. INTRODUCTION

Over the last ten years, the spread of the Internet has brought about unprecedented access to a wealth of information and resources.

Full development of the Internet's potential to improve access to education and training, and enhance the quality of learning, is key to the building of the European knowledge society. Not only education, but also social cohesion and the competitiveness of Europe depend more and more on Europe's ability to adapt its education and training systems in order to realise this potential.

In the *eLearning Action Plan*¹, "e-learning" was defined as "the use of new multimedia technologies and the Internet to improve the quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and services as well as remote exchanges and collaboration". However, "e-learning" has become shorthand for a vision in which Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)-mediated learning is an integral component of education and training systems. In such a scenario, the ability to use ICT becomes a new form of literacy - "digital literacy". Digital literacy thus becomes as important as "classic" literacy and numeracy were one hundred years ago; without it, citizens can neither participate fully in society nor acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for the 21st century.

In recognition of this, the Lisbon, Stockholm and Barcelona European Councils² called for sustained action at Member State and Community levels to integrate ICT in education and training systems, taking full account of the need to ensure social cohesion.

2. EU POLICY FOR ICT IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The conclusions of the Lisbon Council mark a watershed for European co-operation in education and training. They place education and training firmly at the top of the EU political agenda, they call for the adaptation of education and training systems to the knowledge society, and, in particular, they call for the effective integration of information and communication technologies. The subsequent Spring Councils of Stockholm, in 2001, and Barcelona, in 2002, have further developed the Lisbon conclusions, and have confirmed the importance of improved and effective use of ICT for the European knowledge society.

The *eEurope2002*³ and *eEurope2005*⁴ Action Plans adopted by these Councils identify e-learning as a top priority, and fix ambitious objectives for the infrastructure, equipment and basic training which are pre-requisites for its integration. The *eLearning initiative*⁵ further develops these objectives from an educational point of view, stressing the need for innovative pedagogical approaches and for ambitious objectives regarding learning quality and easy access to e-learning resources and services. It also stresses the need for removing other

¹ COM (2001) 172 final

² Lisbon: CS(2000)6557; Stockholm: CS(2001)7001; Barcelona: CS(2002)6856-1

³ *eEurope 2002* COM (2000)783

⁴ *eEurope 2005* COM (2002)263 final

⁵ COM (2000)318 final

structural obstacles to innovation , such as organisational and legal barriers, and the way knowledge and competencies are evaluated and certified.

The Council of Ministers endorsed the eLearning initiative and the importance of ICT for education and training in its eLearning resolution of 13 July 2001⁶, encouraging the Member states “*to continue their efforts concerning the effective integration of ICT in education and training systems, as an important part of the adaptation of the education and training systems*”. This followed the report of the Education Council, entitled “*The concrete future objectives of education and training systems*”⁷, which underlines the importance of ICT in modern education and training systems, confirming that ICT is “*of increasing importance in open learning environments and virtual teaching*”.

Specific attention has been given to fighting the digital divide. In the context of the Luxembourg process, the Council called on the Member States to continue “*developing e-learning for all citizens*”⁸ and in its resolution of 18 October 2001⁹ it encouraged Member States to take e-learning related measures towards full participation of disadvantaged people in the knowledge-based society. Annual National Action Plans for Employment report on the use of ICT for increasing employability and flexibility, and for serving the specific needs of disadvantaged and “at risk” groups. A large share of the structural funds is devoted to this task.

These efforts are producing encouraging results. The eEurope benchmarking exercises “*European youth into the digital age*”¹⁰ for 2001 and 2002 show that the initial eEurope targets of connecting all schools to the Internet and of training a sufficient number of teachers are all but achieved, and that attention must therefore shift to providing a better framework for e-learning, integrating ICT into education and training systems, and better quality of telecommunications infrastructure (broadband).

The European Parliament not only endorsed the eLearning initiative in its *Report on eLearning*¹¹, but also proposed a new budget allocation to explore possibilities for innovative European action in this field. Over the past two years, a number of strategic projects and studies have been launched with this budget. Results so far point to a positive impact of these Community actions, and the European Parliament has therefore reiterated its request for a specific eLearning Programme.

These recent activities build upon past successes. The European Commission started pioneering actions for the use of new technologies in education some time ago and the general objectives of European co-operation in this field were already reflected in the 1983 Council Resolutions¹² on measures to introduce new information technologies in education.

The European Commission has also supported the use of new technologies for education within the successive Research Framework Programmes, starting with the DELTA programme¹³. Under the Information Society Technology Programme, many pilot projects

⁶ Council Resolution on eLearning: OJ C204, 20.7.2001, p. 6-7

⁷ COM(2001)59 final

⁸ COM(2001)669 final "Amended proposal for a Council Decision on Guidelines for Member States' employment policies for the year 2002"

⁹ OJ C292 du 18.10.2001, p 6-8

¹⁰ SEC(2001)1583

¹¹ A5-152/2001

¹² CS(1983)7469

¹³ DELTA – ESPRIT; COM(1987)359 final

have been carried on in the field of *Flexible Universities; Learning at Work; The Learning citizen* and *The School of tomorrow*. In the framework of long-term research, specific efforts have been devoted to anticipate *Experimental School Environments* (E.S.E.).

The 1996 Education Council Resolution in the area of educational multimedia¹⁴ called for the first time for an integrated approach involving all relevant programmes.

Furthermore, the key EU programmes for education and training, Socrates¹⁵ and Leonardo da Vinci¹⁶, both in their second generation, take full account of new technologies. Socrates has a specific line, Minerva, for Open and Distance Learning (ODL) and educational use of ICT. This has had a decisive influence in the creation and interconnectivity of European networks for co-operation at all educational levels. Erasmus and Comenius, the Socrates actions for Higher Education and Schools, make extensive use of new technologies. For the new Socrates Grundtvig action, for adult education and lifelong learning, new technologies are seen as just an everyday tool. Leonardo da Vinci, in particular, has been an innovation-led programme, and is at the source of a growing number of products, services and networks for enhanced training, at all levels, and for lifelong learning.

At Member State level, most countries have their own Action Plan for encouraging the use of ICT in education and training; often involving direct support for local experiments at all levels of education and training, in particular for teachers' and trainers' training. There is a rich experience, in some cases reaching already the third or fourth "generation" of policy documents, based on the evaluation of past efforts and involving wide ranging consultation with educational practitioners. In all Member States, specific policies for the integration of ICT in education and training systems are considered necessary.

Under the eLearning initiative, close co-operation has been initiated with Member States in several fields, such as teacher education, science education, new learning environments, or virtual universities. This co-operation should be followed up in the context of the new eLearning Programme, aiming at the joint analysis and exploitation of experience, and at the identification of good practice and different approaches to issues of common interest.

3. CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

3.1. Modernising Europe's education and training systems

3.1.1. Higher education

Universities and higher education institutions are key actors in the production and dissemination of knowledge, in the development of social, pedagogical and technological research, in the training of teachers and trainers, and in the continuous professional development which is a hallmark of the knowledge society. They are increasingly using e-learning as a source of added value for their students, and for providing on-campus and off-campus, flexible, virtual learning through web-based resources. In order to respond to the changing education market and the challenges posed by global competition, some universities are entering into strategic partnerships and adopting new business models. The most successful players to-date, however, remain the well-established and prestigious institutions

¹⁴ COM(1996)120 final

¹⁵ COM(1994)502 final

¹⁶ COM(1994)215 final

rather than new global ventures which have largely failed to develop sustainable business models or maintain high standards of learning. ‘e-learning’ is proving to be a major evolution rather than a revolution.

At the European level, promising co-operation has been set up in the university context. More than 700 European universities have been involved in large-scale co-operation projects, and in an in-depth reflection on the organisation of universities and on pedagogical requirements to be embedded in the use of new educational approaches and models. Competition may, in some cases, contradict the political will for co-operation, but bring new funding and research opportunities for European universities.

Pilot experiments in the field of e-learning (open and distance learning, virtual campuses, virtual universities, virtual mobility) have also provided good opportunities to rethink University organisation, curricula or European strategy; to assess the impact of ICT for interactions amongst teachers and students; to address the opening of universities to new audiences, and to answer continuous professional development and lifelong learning requirements. Other pilot projects stressed the potential of high level e-learning services, for professionals or corporate customers, as a new source of revenues for Universities.

In the field of distance education, representatives of 10 networks, such as the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU) or European Federation for the Education of the Children of the Occupational Travellers (EFECOT), have joined to form a “Liaison Committee of the European Open and Distance Learning Networks”¹⁷. The European Association of Universities, bringing together over 500 universities, is a permanent observer of this “Liaison Committee”.

As a preparation for drafting this eLearning Programme, an e-learning working group was set up with representatives of traditional and Open Distance Universities. The participants concluded that a new eLearning Programme should help to clarify the ‘why’ and the ‘how’ to use ICT in education, and that the focus should be on innovative educational methods and settings. Virtual campuses and web-based resources can reach out to new students and fulfil educational requirements which were not properly addressed. The participants recommended further exploration of the existing experience in European universities, better monitoring and building on what already exists. The different scenarios for virtual universities must be better analysed, with a view to possible transfer throughout Europe.

3.1.2. Schools

In schools we are seeing greater emphasis being placed on the quality of e-learning products and services, and on the pedagogical context for their use. We are moving beyond questions of connectivity and infrastructure, to ones associated with content, teacher training and organisational implications, including new social interactions inside and beyond schools.

As regards the training of teachers and school management, there is now a tendency to focus less on the ‘e’ of e-learning, and more on the ‘learning’ component of the process. Successful use of the new content and services depends to a large extent on the quality of teaching and the commitment of teachers. Where more advanced training is available, teachers find support to collaborate more closely, to design educational resources, to assess their own teaching, and to use technology as a tool for enhancing their approach to learning and teaching. In this

¹⁷ Internet site and links to the 13 member institutions, grouping a majority of European universities: <http://www.odl-liaison.org>

respect, the pedagogical context is very important and more needs to be done to understand the success factors for *good practice*.

Promising European co-operation has also been set up in the school context. More than 5000 schools have directly or indirectly participated in actions supported by European education programmes. Most of the pilot experiments demonstrate that innovation results from the interaction between three series of parameters : use of ICT, learning approaches, and specific educational contexts. This poses questions about, for example, the current organisation of learning space and time at school.

Among the promising areas of co-operation, it is worth mentioning the creation and development of EUN, the European Schoolnet, launched in 1998 for co-operation between the European Ministries of Education on ICT in education issues, and which involves 23 Ministries of Education throughout Europe. EUN is running a number of important research projects, a network of innovative schools, and several awareness and communication services. The EUN portals¹⁸ link also to the portals of the participating Ministries of Education, and to e-learning resources developed by teachers.

Several workshops were held during the preparation of the eLearning programme. They concluded that it was important to have a better analysis of the process of learning and of the specific contributions that could be made by ICT in different contexts. More than ever, the emphasis is now on assessing and understanding the added-value of ICT for learning and focussing on the learning and communication aspects rather than on the technological ones. Other workshops, organised in the context of the follow-up of the “Report on the concrete and future objectives of education and training systems” called for monitoring, evaluation and peer-reviews of practice and experience in this field of education.

At the Barcelona European Summit the Heads of State and Government asked the Commission to report on the feasibility of school twinning, at a European level. The report¹⁹ produced by the Commission, provides details on the benefits of using ICT for supporting virtual and physical mobility, and for achieving the objective that all young Europeans, during their time at school, participate together with their teachers in an educational project with pupils and teachers in other European countries. This opportunity could be a decisive milestone for fostering the European dimension of education, and the awareness by young people of the multilingual and multicultural European model of society. Internet-based e-learning communities can contribute to improving language learning, intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding.

3.1.3. *Learning at work*

In the work place, emphasis has been placed on cost savings and on flexible, just-in-time education and training, which is integrated into the worker’s environment. In a context where new skills and competencies have to be upgraded for rapidly changing business and labour-market needs, e-learning is proving to be very popular as a cost-effective solution (e.g. up to 60% of the training needs of key players in the ICT sector is now provided by e-learning). “Corporate universities” are amongst the most advanced players in this field, especially in the Information Technology sector. There seem to be obvious advantages for SMEs to use such methods, as they cannot afford the costs and time involved in staff training. However, further

¹⁸ www.eun.org and schoolnet.eun.org

¹⁹ Twinning report: COM(2002)283/F-1

effort is required to allow small companies to understand, shape and use e-learning tools and methods according to their own requirements.

e-learning offers particular advantages when it comes to keeping information and course contents up-to-date with respect to rapidly changing business, environmental and regulatory needs. For example, an e-learning course offering support to craftsmen working in small foundries can be rapidly updated to reflect changes in regulation concerning the use of chemicals in the work place.

The communication on the e-Economy²⁰ emphasises the urgent need to tackle the ICT and e-business skills shortages and, in this context, to promote the development of e-learning solutions. The e-Skills Summit also called for greater investment in lifelong learning supported by e-learning²¹.

There is a growing demand for individuals to take greater responsibility and control of their own learning. Employers are moving from a system of centrally delivered standardised training, to one in which they invest in the self learning of their employees. E-learning facilitates this process of empowering the learner to match his or her own needs for personal development with those of the rapidly changing work environment. As such, e-learning contributes positively to the development of human capital and to an improvement in the quality of work²²

3.2. The emerging paradigm of lifelong learning

The communication from the Commission 'Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality'²³, as well as the Commission staff working document and the Council Resolution on e-Inclusion in the knowledge society (e-Inclusion)²⁴, identify e-learning as one important means for their implementation.

Working groups in these fields point to a growing need for information and guidance on e-learning methods and resources, and for public Internet access points. These should be provided in libraries, cultural institutions, other public institutions, and in other easily accessible places, with a user-oriented approach. Local and regional authorities have a key role to play here. There is also an urgent need for public policy as a driving force for fostering motivation for learning and valuing of learning.

In order to enhance the contribution which e-learning resources can make to the learning process, it is important to ensure that e-learning products and methods are able to take into account individual needs and learning-styles, and that they are not based on a "one size fits all" philosophy, in which learners are seen as standardised "units".

If e-learning is to be able to contribute effectively to the essential objective of 'Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality', teachers and trainers will have a vital role to play not only in the *use* of e-learning resources, but in their *development*, by providing views, feedback and advice to the producers of these materials both on their quality and on their

²⁰ COM(2001)711 final (29.11.2001)

²¹ European e-Skills Summit Declaration, 16-18 October 2002, Copenhagen, Final Draft

²² COM(2001)313 final of 20.6.2001, Communication of the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions *Employment and social policies: a framework for investing in quality*

²³ COM(2001)678 final

²⁴ SEC(2001)1428 (18.9.2001)

flexibility to answer different needs. Moreover, e-learning products and services should take into account personal learning styles and help foster individual responsibility and participation in the lifelong learning process.

3.3. Public-private partnerships

The need for lifelong education and training opportunities requires in turn new models of provision and funding of learning resources. The Lisbon Council calls, for example, for the creation of databases on learning opportunities linked to databases on job opportunities. It also calls on the social responsibility of enterprises for collaboration in the fulfilment of these new demands, which result largely in the development of the key asset for them: a well-educated work force. The Committee of Regions has emphasised that local and regional authorities, Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and social partners should be involved in public-private partnership, as grass-roots players have a major role for implementing learning objectives.

Promising co-operation was initiated at the eLearning Summit²⁵ on 10-11 May 2001, which fostered successful partnerships between public authorities and ICT, e-learning and media companies. As a result, in April 2002, the eLearning Industry Group (eLIG), an autonomous working group, was created by industry. The group will work with the European Commission, national governments and academia to undertake innovative projects to promote e-learning deployment in Europe.

The eLIG²⁶ will provide advice to the European Commission and national governments across Europe in areas such as ICT infrastructure, open standards that facilitate the exchange of e-learning content, development of a sustainable market for e-learning content and development of crucial professional and personal skills. It has chosen to pursue four projects for the development of e-learning in Europe, which correspond with the general priorities set up under the European research and education programmes. These are: connectivity; open standards for e-learning; professional development of teachers and trainers; and European platforms for distribution and exchange of e-learning contents.

3.4. Quality contents and services

Information and communication technologies (ICT) offer significant potential for the improvement of education and training. They support learning processes, through enhanced communication, discovery, simulation, exploration, problem solving, etc. The programme will pay special attention to understanding the specific contributions that can be made by ICT in these different contexts, and creating an environment that is conducive to developing quality e-learning contents and services. New learning methods may involve radical changes in the definition of contents and subjects to be explored, in the aptitudes - that one may learn through the different media - as well as in the cognitive mechanisms that are brought into play in the approach of different subjects.

Many early attempts at e-learning were unsuccessful as they did not consider well enough the needs of the learner and the nature of what is to be learnt. They often isolated the learner, providing little or no opportunity for social interaction. They dictated the way people learn,

²⁵ European eLearning summit Declaration Final 18-5 (La Hulpe, 10-11.5.2001)

²⁶ The founding members and core partners of the eLIG are 3Com, Accenture, Apple, BT, Cisco, Digitalbrain, IBM, Intel, Line Communications, NIIT, Nokia, Online Courseware Factory, Sanoma WSOY, Sun Microsystems and Vivendi Universal Publishing

with little flexibility and no possibility to adapt to the needs of the individual learner. However, thanks to our increased understanding of e-learning (how and when it should be used) and the continuing advances in technology (noticeably the opportunities offered by the Internet) e-learning is starting to show real benefits. There are increased opportunities for learners to interact with each other - face to face and at a distance – in combining traditional education and innovative educational pathways.

Essential to this ‘blended’, flexible approach to providing e-learning, is the requirement for new approaches to contents and services.

Whereas the Commission cannot itself get involved in the production of content and in the implementation of new services, it can do much to create the right conditions for sustainable markets and public investments. In particular, it should take into account the issues that are related to intellectual property rights, copyright agreements, new distribution methods, the promotion of internationally accepted standards and open software.

As regards the global market for e-learning products and services, it is expected to grow strongly in the forthcoming years, providing both a challenge and an opportunity to European education systems and to related economic sectors such as multimedia publishing. However, recent downturns in the ICT sector and consolidations in the market for e-learning products have shown that the transition may not be as quick or as smooth as originally expected. This also provides a window of opportunity for the European multimedia sector to catch up. There is a need to understand and address the factors for securing the quality educational outcomes which should result from public and private investments.

3.5. Fighting the digital divide

The development of the knowledge society and economy carries the risk of a new kind of social disadvantage: the digital divide. Not having easy access to the Internet, or not being able to use ICT tools confidently, is becoming a barrier to social integration and personal development. In a few years, for example, a majority of jobs in industry and services have come to require the use of ICT-based tools. e-Government allows citizens a much easier and user-friendly access to public administration. The same can be said for e-health services. But what is progress for some can become an additional obstacle for others. This is often the case for people and groups who are already victims of other forms of social exclusion.

An important step in fighting the digital divide falls within the remit of education; it is the promotion of digital literacy. The whole scope of digital literacy needs to be addressed, taking into account the many facets of how the use of the Internet and electronic devices can become part of everyday practices. On the one hand, the use of the Internet presupposes sound proficiency in the mother tongue and other languages, and other basic skills. On the other hand, a whole range of new competences are required: media competences; creating, producing and using new digital services; designing new educational objects and games. European countries should address the full range of proficiencies that are required and revisit the teaching of basic educational skills. Only then can the Internet serve as a stimulus to learning by extending the physical boundaries of the classroom through access to information and communication environments.

The Lisbon Council Conclusions, the political brief for the development of the European knowledge society, stress the importance of a socially cohesive approach, aimed at preventing the digital divide. Community action on this front is largely implemented via the Structural Funds. The European Regional Development Fund finances Regional Information Society

Initiatives and Innovative Actions, many of which have important education and training components. The Social Fund addresses the needs of less favoured categories of users, in particular of the unemployed, or those whose employment is at risk; of those living in isolated regions or in deprived areas; of those having special needs or problems. The experience gained through these actions should be exploited for the benefit of other regions and users by facilitating the exchange of good practices and establishing links with the wider education and training policy.

4. THE NEED FOR SPECIFIC ACTION

The above overview illustrates the importance of meeting the e-learning challenges we face.

The range of existing Community instruments and programmes relevant for the development of e-learning is large, ranging from regional policy or telecommunications policy to advanced technological research or IPR (intellectual property rights regulation), not to mention education and training programmes. Yet, in spite of their potential synergy, these actions are often unconnected and their results are often not widely known. The eLearning Action Plan's objective of providing greater visibility and coherence was intended to address precisely these problems.

This proposal to further develop the Action Plan into a Programme aims at complementing its monitoring and co-ordinating actions with a selected set of targeted strategic actions on high priority areas. These actions should produce a better understanding of the real impact of ICT and Internet in these priority areas and of the real problems and opportunities that ICT brings to them, as well as identify the key factors for successful use of ICT and how to implement them. These actions should also result in a better structuring of European co-operation in the said areas, foster the development of e-learning methods, contents and services, and stimulate co-operation and debate.

The nature of the proposed actions is such that they cross the traditional borders of school education, higher education, vocational training and adult learning. Indeed, with e-learning a whole new range of partnerships becomes practicable: public-public, public-private and private-private. For example, schools are called on to work more closely with universities and other sources of knowledge – museums, cultural centres, factories, hospitals, libraries, etc; universities and vocational training centres are able to co-operate with industry to offer virtual apprenticeships and more context related learning; SMEs are called on to work together with local or regional administrations and industry associations on common training needs.

Whereas the current education and training programmes of Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci are already supporting use of new technologies in the education and training sectors respectively, the full advantages of e-learning may only be realised in a programme which transcends the boundaries of education and training, in a true lifelong learning perspective. In addition, a new programme would offer the possibility to try out new, more flexible modes of operation, which are more in keeping with the innovative nature of e-learning.

5. PRIORITIES AND OBJECTIVES

It is proposed that a financial support programme be adopted with the overall objective of improving the quality and accessibility of European education and training systems through the effective integration of new technologies (e-learning), supporting and complementing the actions of Member States in this field. This programme should contribute substantially to the

Lisbon strategy. In the context of severe budgetary restraints, a choice of priority areas for the eLearning programme must be made. The choice follows a series of consultations that took place with European education networks, working groups and experts and builds on the experience gained in the Action Plan. The four priority areas proposed are given below, together with the objectives for each priority. The eLearning Programme aims to address each of these four areas in a coherent and consistent way, providing relevant information for policy making, facilitating exchange of experience and good practice, and building on Europe's valuable e-learning resources.:

- **Fighting the digital divide.** Actions in this area will address the contribution of ICT for learning, in particular for those who -due to their geographical location, social situation or special needs- are not able to benefit from traditional educational and training provisions. The objective is to foster awareness and understanding of how ICT can aid these less privileged groups to acquire basic educational skills and new competences that are needed for the knowledge society. It will identify good examples and build synergies between the many national and European projects which address these target groups.
- **Universities and higher education institutions.** The priority here is better integration of the virtual dimension in physical mobility, quality assurance and the mutual recognition schemes of the Bologna Process. The objective is to encourage the development of new organisational models for European universities (virtual campus) and for European exchange and sharing schemes (virtual mobility), building on existing European co-operation frameworks (Erasmus programme, Bologna process), and providing an “e-learning dimension” to their operational tools (ECTS, European Masters ; quality assurance ; mobility).
- **School twinning via the Internet.** This priority shall implement a request of the Barcelona European Council, which identified school twinning is an opportunity for young people to learn and practice ICT skills, as well as promoting awareness of the multilingual and multicultural European model of society. The objective is to strengthen and develop schools networking, in particular via an European-wide school-twinning scheme which should make it possible for all European schools to build pedagogical partnerships with a school elsewhere in Europe, fostering language learning and intercultural dialogue.
- **Transversal actions** for the promotion of e-learning in Europe, building on the **monitoring of the eLearning Action Plan.** The objectives are the dissemination, promotion and take-up of good practice and products from the many projects and programmes which have been funded at the European level or by Member States and to reinforce co-operation between the various actors involved, in particular by fostering public-private partnerships.

In order to achieve its objectives, the programme will finance the following types of actions:

- A strategic set of actions related to each of the above objectives, such as, for example, analysis of results and exchange of European experience in the provision of polyvalent public learning centres ; specific « e-learning developments » for university co-operation agreements under Erasmus ; a regional network for support and pedagogical guidance of school-twinning ;

- A strategic set of actions aimed at the systematic identification, analysis and exchange of good practice through focused workshops, seminars, studies, reports, etc supported by a European “virtual infrastructure” for co-operation and exchange (such as, for example, the eLearning European portal) ;
- Design and development of monitoring, analysis and forecasting tools for e-learning in Europe, including the funding of specific surveys, studies and intelligence gathering activities on the real use of e-learning in the different educational contexts, and the co-operation with existing international projects (such as, for example PISA-OECD) ;
- Design of a virtual structure for the provision of meaningful and timely information on e-learning in Europe, for academy, industry and policy-making needs, building on the above, and in co-operation with Eurostat, the European Investment Bank, and OECD ;
- Monitoring of the eLearning Action Plan ; clustering of relevant e-learning projects from the education, training, research and other relevant programmes, and of the Structural Funds with a view to effective synergy and to reaching the « critical mass » required for take-up by education and training systems ; and building on them, where appropriate, new co-operation platforms open to all interested education stakeholders ;
- Targeted events (conferences, seminars, workshops, etc) to promote awareness of the eLearning Programme actions, co-operation between interested parties and Member States, and the effective transfer of public domain e-learning methods, contents and services.

Proposal for a

DECISION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL

adopting a multi-annual programme (2004-2006) for the effective integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in education and training systems in Europe (eLearning Programme)

(Text with EEA relevance)

THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 149(4) and Article 150(4) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission²⁷,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee²⁸,

Having regard to the opinion of the Committee for the Regions²⁹,

Acting in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 251 of the Treaty,

Whereas:

- (1) The objectives of the education and training programmes Socrates³⁰ and Leonardo da Vinci³¹ include the development of open and distance learning, and the use of information and communication technologies.
- (2) The conclusions of the European Council meeting held in Lisbon on 23 and 24 March 2000 ("the Lisbon Council"), emphasised the need for adaptation of European education and training systems to the needs of the knowledge economy, and declared the promotion of new basic skills, in particular in information technologies, as one of the three main components of this new approach.
- (3) The conclusions of the Lisbon Council call for investment in people and stress the need to ensure that the emergence of this new economy does not compound existing social problems of unemployment, social exclusion and poverty. The conclusions call for the promotion of digital literacy throughout the Union.

²⁷ OJ C [...], [...], p. [...]

²⁸ OJ C [...], [...], p. [...]

²⁹ OJ C [...], [...], p. [...]

³⁰ Decision 253/2000/EC of 24 January 2000, OJ L28, 3.2.2000, p. 1-15

³¹ Decision 382/1999/EC of 26 April 1999, OJ L146, 11.6.1999, p. 33-47

- (4) The Action Plan eEurope 2002³², developing the Lisbon strategy, presented the eLearning initiative as its educational component, and fixed a series of ambitious targets, inter alia, for connecting schools to Internet and for providing the necessary training to a sufficient number of teachers. The Action Plan eEurope 2005³³ further identifies eLearning as an important policy measure.
- (5) The initiative "eLearning: designing tomorrow's education"³⁴, launched in May 2000 by the Commission in response to the Lisbon Council was endorsed by the European Council at its meeting in Feira in June 2000. At its meeting in Stockholm in March 2001, the European Council noted the positive results of the initiative.
- (6) The "eLearning Action Plan"³⁵ developed the four action lines of the eLearning initiative (infrastructures and equipment, training, European quality contents and services and co-operation at all levels) in ten key actions, bringing together the diverse Community programmes and instruments, for increased coherence and synergy between them and for enhanced accessibility to users.
- (7) The European Parliament adopted resolutions on both communications³⁶ recognising that the eLearning initiative is helping to strengthen the idea of a 'single European educational area', which complements the European research area and the European single market, and calling for it to be developed independently under a new specific programme, with a clear legal basis, avoiding duplication with existing programmes and providing more visibility and added value to Community action.
- (8) The European Parliament³⁷ the Economic and Social Committee³⁸ and the Committee of the Regions³⁹ adopted positive opinions on the eLearning initiative.
- (9) The Council Resolution of 13 July 2001 on e-learning⁴⁰ endorses the above, and calls upon the Commission to continue and intensify its actions in this field.
- (10) The Commission adopted, on 21 November 2001, the Communication "Making a European area of lifelong learning a reality"⁴¹, signalling the potential of e-learning for enabling and managing new educational opportunities to this end.
- (11) There is a need to address the problem of social exclusion resulting from the inability of some individuals to take full advantage of the benefits offered by Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and the Internet in the knowledge society, the so-called "digital divide", which often affects young people and social categories who are already victims of other forms of exclusion. e-learning has the potential to strengthen social cohesion and to avoid the risks of increased social exclusion.

³² COM(2000)330 final

³³ COM(2002)263 final

³⁴ COM(2000)318 final

³⁵ COM(2001)172 final

³⁶ COM(2000)318 - C5-0741/2000 and COM(2001) 172 - C5-0151/201 - 2000/23337 (COS)

³⁷ Final A5-152/2001, 27 April 2001

³⁸ OJ C36, 8.2.2002, p. 63-71.

³⁹ OJ C144, 16.5.2001, p.34-37.

⁴⁰ OJ C 204, 20.7.2001, p. 3-5.

⁴¹ COM (2001)678 final.

- (12) Close attention should be paid to gender differences in the use of e-learning and the promotion of equal opportunities in this field.
- (13) e-learning has the potential to help the Union respond to the challenges of the knowledge society, to improve the quality of learning, to facilitate access to learning resources, to address specific needs, in particular for handicapped people, and to bring about more effective and efficient learning and training at the workplace, in particular in small and medium sized enterprises.
- (14) The need for a European dimension in higher education was identified in the Bologna Declaration, signed by 29 European Ministers for Education on 19 June 1999, together with the importance of developing an e-learning dimension in this context, in particular with regard to the development of curricula, mutual recognition systems, quality assurance, mobility programmes, and integrated study, training and research programmes, for teachers, researchers and administrative staff.
- (15) The conclusions of the European Council meeting held in Barcelona in March 2002 called for a European-wide school-twinning action, and were followed by the Commission Report on school twinings via Internet⁴², presented to the European Council at its meeting in Seville.
- (16) There is a need for European quality services and contents for education and training which are multilingual, multicultural and affordable for education and training systems. It is also necessary to develop a vibrant private and public European marketplace⁴³ and to facilitate public access to multimedia for learning purposes.
- (17) In order to reinforce the added value of Community action it is necessary to ensure coherence and complementarity between the actions implemented in the framework of this Decision and other relevant Community policies, instruments and actions, in particular the Information Society Technologies thematic priority of the sixth framework programme for research⁴⁴.
- (18) The candidate countries for accession to the European Union and EFTA-EEA states should be able to participate in the programme. Experts and educational institutions from other third countries should be able to participate in the exchange of experience in the framework of existing co-operation with these third countries.
- (19) This programme should be regularly monitored and evaluated in co-operation between the Commission and the Member States in order to allow for readjustments, particularly in the priorities for implementing the measures. The evaluation should include an external evaluation to be conducted by independent, impartial bodies.

⁴² COM (2002)283 F-1

⁴³ Council Decision 2001/48/EC adopting a Multi-annual Community programme to stimulate the development and use of European digital content on the global networks and to promote the linguistic diversity in the information society, OJ L14, 18.1.2001, p.32

⁴⁴ Decision 1513/2002/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2002 concerning the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contribution to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 to 2006), OJ L232, 29.8.2002, p. 1

- (20) Since the objective of the proposed action, namely the promotion of European co-operation to improve the quality of and accessibility to education and training dimension by an effective use of e-learning, cannot be sufficiently achieved by the Member States because of the transnational dimension of the actions and measures necessary, the Community may adopt measures, in accordance with the principle of subsidiarity as set out in Article 5 of the Treaty. In accordance with the principle of proportionality, as set out in that Article, this Decision does not go beyond what is necessary in order to achieve those objectives;
- (21) This Decision establishes a financial framework for the entire duration of the programme which is to be the principal point of reference for the budgetary authority, within the meaning of point 33 of the Interinstitutional Agreement of 6 May 1999 between the European Parliament, the Council and the Commission, on budgetary discipline and improvement of the budgetary procedure;
- (22) The measures necessary for the implementation of this Decision should be adopted in accordance with Council Decision 1999/468/EC of 28 June 1999 laying down the procedures for the exercise of implementing powers conferred on the Commission⁴⁵,

HAVE DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

Establishment of the programme

1. This Decision establishes the eLearning Programme, a multi-annual programme for the improvement of the quality and accessibility of European education and training systems through the effective use of information and communication technologies, hereafter referred to as “the programme”
2. This programme shall be implemented over a period starting on 1 January 2004 and ending on 31 December 2006.

Article 2

Objectives of the programme

1. The overall objective of the programme is to promote and facilitate the effective use of information and communication technologies in European education and training systems, as a contribution to a quality education and an essential element of their adaptation to the needs of the knowledge society and of the European model of social cohesion.
2. The specific objectives of the programme are:
 - (a) to explore and to promote ways and means of using e-learning for strengthening social cohesion and personal development, fostering intercultural dialogue, and fighting the digital divide;

⁴⁵ OJ L 184, 17.7.1999, p. 23

- (b) to promote and develop the use of e-learning as an enabling factor for the implementation of the lifelong learning paradigm in Europe;
- (c) to exploit the potential of e-learning for enhancing the European dimension in education;
- (d) to facilitate a more structured co-operation in the field of e-learning between the diverse Community programmes and instruments and Member States actions;
- (e) to provide mechanisms for encouraging improvement of quality of products and services as well as for their effective dissemination and for exchange of good practice.

Article 3

Areas of intervention of the Programme

1. The objectives of the programme shall be pursued in the following areas of intervention, in accordance with the action lines described in the Annex:
 - (a) **fighting the digital divide:** Actions in this area will address the contribution of ICT for learning, in particular for those who -due to their geographical location, social situation or special needs- are not able to benefit from traditional educational and training provisions. They will identify good examples and build synergies between the many national and European projects which address these target groups. Guidance in this field will be provided through studies and a High Level Group of experts;
 - (b) **European virtual campuses:** Actions in this area will address a better integration of the virtual dimension in Higher Education. The objective is to encourage the development of new organisational models for European virtual universities (virtual campus) and for European exchange and sharing schemes (virtual mobility), building on existing European co-operation frameworks (Erasmus programme, Bologna process), and providing an “e-learning dimension” to their operational tools (ECTS, European Masters ; quality assurance ; mobility);
 - (c) **e-twinning European schools:** Actions in this area will strengthen and develop schools networking, in particular via an European-wide school-twinning scheme which should make it possible for all European schools to build pedagogical partnerships with a school elsewhere in Europe, fostering language learning and intercultural dialogue, and promoting awareness of the multilingual and multicultural European model of society;
 - (d) **transversal actions:** Actions in this area will address the promotion of e-learning in Europe, building on the **monitoring of the eLearning Action Plan**. The objectives are the dissemination, promotion and take-up of good practices and products from the many projects and programmes which have been funded at the European level or by Member States and to reinforce co-operation between the various actors involved, in particular by fostering public-private partnerships.

2. These actions shall be realised in accordance with the procedures set out in the Annex, and through the following approaches, which may be combined where appropriate:
 - (a) support for strategic pilot projects, with potential for significant impact, and clear prospects for long-term sustainability;
 - (b) support for the development of research, analysis and monitoring of methods, tools, practice and trends in the design and use of 'e-learning' models for education and training;
 - (c) support for strategic actions by European networks and partnerships designed to foster innovation, quality in the design and use of products and services, based on the relevant use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) for education and training;
 - (d) support for European platforms for dissemination, co-operation and exchange of good practice
 - (e) technical and administrative assistance.

Article 4

Implementation of the programme and co-operation with the Member States

1. The Commission shall:
 - (a) ensure the implementation of the Community actions covered by this programme in conformity with the Annex;
 - (b) seek synergies with other Community programmes and actions in the field of education, research, social policy and regional development;
 - (c) foster and facilitate co-operation with international organisations developing activities in the field of e-learning
2. The Member States shall :
 - (a) take the necessary steps to ensure close co-operation with the Commission; particularly as regards relevant information about e-learning use and practice;
 - (b) take steps to ensure that potential synergies with other Community programmes are achieved at Member State level.

Article 5

Implementing measures

1. The following measures necessary for the implementation of this Decision shall be adopted in accordance with the management procedure referred to in Article 6(2) :

- (a) the annual plan of work, including priorities, and the selection criteria and procedures;
 - (b) the annual budget and the breakdown of funds among the different actions of the programme, in accordance with Articles 9 and 10;
 - (c) the measures for monitoring and evaluating the programme and for the dissemination and transfer of results.
2. All other measures necessary for the implementation of this Decision shall be adopted in accordance with the advisory procedure referred to in Article 6(3).

Article 6

Committee

1. The Commission shall be assisted by a Committee composed of representatives of the Member States and chaired by the representative of the Commission.
2. Where reference is made to this paragraph, Articles 4 and 7 of Decision 1999/468/EC shall apply, having regard to the provisions of Article 8 thereof.

The period laid down in Article 4(3) of Decision 1999/468/EC shall be set at two months.
3. Where reference is made to this paragraph, Articles 3 and 7 of Decision 1999/468/EC shall apply, having regard to the provisions of Article 8 thereof.
4. The Committee shall adopt its rules of procedure.

Article 7

Co-operation with other programme committees and information on other Community initiatives

1. To ensure the consistency of this programme with other measures referred to in Article 8, the Commission shall keep the Committee regularly informed about Community initiatives taken in the fields of education, training and youth, including co-operation with international organisations.
2. The Commission shall ensure that information concerning the execution of the programme is regularly communicated to other related programme committees.

Article 8

Consistency and complementarity

1. The Commission shall, in co-operation with the Member States, ensure overall consistency and complementarity of the programme with other relevant Community policies, instruments and actions, in particular with the education and training programmes Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth.

2. The Commission shall ensure efficient linkage and, where appropriate, co-ordinated actions, between this programme and the programmes and actions in the area of new technologies for education and training, in particular with the relevant actions for research, technological development and demonstration activities under the 6th Framework Programme⁴⁶.

Article 9

Funding

1. The financial framework for the implementation of the programme for the period specified in Article 1 shall be EUR 36 million.
2. Annual appropriations shall be authorised by the budgetary authority within the limit of the financial perspective.

Article 10

Budget distribution

1. Budgetary distribution between the actions shall be as follows:
 - (a) e-learning for fighting the digital divide: around 25% of total budget
 - (b) European virtual campuses: around 30% of total budget
 - (c) E-twinning European schools: around 25% of total budget
 - (d) Transversal actions and monitoring of e-learning: around 10% of total budget
 - (e) Technical and administrative assistance: around 10% of total budget

Article 11

Participation of EFTA-EEA States, and candidate countries for accession to the European Union

The conditions and modalities for the participation of EFTA States which are members of the EEA and countries candidate for accession to the European Union in this programme shall be established in accordance with the relevant provisions of the instruments governing the relations between the European Community and these countries.

⁴⁶ OJ L 232, 29.8.2002, p.1

Article 12

Co-operation with third countries

On the initiative of the Commission, experts from third countries other than those referred to in Article 11 may be invited to participate in conferences and meetings with the exception of meetings of the Committee.

The funds allocated for the reimbursement of travel and subsistence expenses, under the applicable Commission regulations, should not exceed 0.02% of the programme's total budget.

Article 13

Monitoring and evaluation

1. The Commission shall regularly monitor the programme in co-operation with the Member States. The results of the monitoring and evaluation process shall be utilised when implementing the programme.

This monitoring shall include the reports referred to in paragraph 3a) and specific activities.

2. The Commission shall ensure external evaluation of the programme, both mid-term and at the moment of its completion. This evaluation is intended to assess the relevance, effectiveness and impact of the different actions, and it shall also consider the overall impact of the programme. Special attention shall be paid to social cohesion issues and to equal opportunities issues.

This evaluation shall also examine the complementarity between action under the programme and that pursued under other relevant Community policies, instruments and actions.

3. The Commission shall submit to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions:
 - (a) an interim evaluation report on the results achieved and on the qualitative aspects of the implementation of this programme up to 30 June 2005, before the end of 2005;
 - (b) an ex-post evaluation report by 31 December 2007.

Article 14

Entry into force

This Decision shall enter into force on the twentieth day following that of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Communities*.

Done at Brussels,

For the European Parliament
The President

For the Council
The President

ANNEX

1. ACTION LINES

The action lines are a means to implement the general objective of the programme: to foster the development and appropriate use of e-learning in Europe, and to accompany Member States efforts in this field. They are structured according to the four areas of intervention of the programme.

1.1. Action Line 1“e-learning for fighting the digital divide”

This action covers the use of e-learning to address problems associated with the digital divide; a new or additional form of social exclusion resulting from the inability of some individuals to take full advantage of the benefits offered by ICT and the Internet in the knowledge society. Action in this field must cover both conceptual and practical issues, from the understanding of digital literacy to identification of remedial actions for specific target groups.

- a) **Understanding digital literacy.** Digital literacy is one of the essential skills and competencies needed to take an active part in the knowledge society and the new media culture. Digital literacy also relates to Media Literacy and Social Competency, as they have in common objectives like active citizenship and responsible use of ICTs. This action should foster awareness and understanding of these essential skills and competencies, and of how ICT can aid their acquisition in a lifelong learning context. This reflection should address the different ways and levels that ICT may be used for learning, working, citizenship and personal fulfilment. It will work via the:
- **Creation of a network of high level experts**, who will provide guidance and advice to this action, and to selection of projects under it.
 - Funding of targeted **seminars, workshops, reports and surveys**.
- b) **Identification and dissemination of good practice in the use of e-learning to fight the digital divide.** This action should provide relevant information on the use of different e-learning models, via assessment and documentation of good case studies with particular emphasis on:
- Improving access to learning resources for those who have no easy access to ICT, for example, via public access centres equipped with e-learning resources and providing guidance and assistance whenever necessary;
 - Addressing the needs of young learners, in particular those who are increasingly at the margins of society such as school drop-outs or disadvantages immigrants.
 - Addressing cognitive and didactic approach differences, and different learning styles. Under this point, attention will be paid to the different needs and attitudes of men and women in the use of new media, in view to ensuring gender equality;
 - Addressing specific needs, for example, those of hospitalised children or handicapped users;

- The educational use of general access media, such as television, at home and in resource centres, developing the new possibilities of digital media;
 - The development of new tools and educational content for young people, such as , for example, using interactive game approaches;
 - The development of new tools and educational services for general needs such as education for citizenship or intercultural dialogue;
 - The development of new tools and services for motivating and helping adults in re-skilling for the knowledge society, building upon the work being carried out by Members States in the context of the eEurope2005 Action Plan;
- c) **Awareness and information actions via European networks in this field.** This line will support actions against the digital divide carried out by European networks, associations, public authorities, public-private partnerships, or any other form of co-operation. It will supporting contacts and exchange of good practice between them, including whenever appropriate support to the creation of new networks, for example, of European projects under the different community programmes.

1.2. Action Line 2: "European virtual Campuses"

This action line aims at providing an “e-learning dimension” to European initiatives in the field of Higher Education. It will contribute to the creation of a European Area of Higher Education, and it will, in particular, build on the Bologna Process.

- a) **Support of the Bologna process.** This action aims at developing the “e-learning aspects” of the different components of the Bologna process, and in particular those concerning:
- virtual mobility as a complement and reinforcement for physical mobility (virtual ERASMUS);
 - recognition and validation schemes (ECTS) for e-learning courses;
 - information and guidance services, or any other synergies between virtual and traditional models between universities involved in this process.

These projects should be based on institutional agreements, whenever possible extending or complementing existing co-operation agreements in the context of the Erasmus or Erasmus World programmes.

- b) **Trans-national virtual campuses.** The programme could support a limited number of strategic projects to be proposed by higher educational establishments from, at least, three Member States. Co-operation models for e-learning should be developed in the following areas:
- design of trans-national education and training degrees by several universities, including standard agreements for academic recognition;
 - large scale experiments of virtual mobility in addition to physical mobility;

- development of innovative dual mode curricula - based on both traditional and on-line learning methods;

c) **European e-learning models for Higher Education.** These projects should develop new models for co-operation between European Higher Education institutions, in particular addressing:

- the role of virtual universities in the provision of continuous training and professional development, and in the development of learning support services such as structured access to learning resources such as libraries, museums, research centres;
- the role of virtual universities for training teachers, trainers and other educational personnel in the pedagogical use of e-learning;
- developing a better understanding of organisational change for implementing e-learning in Higher Education, and of its impact on assessment and guidance;
- Development of European models for public-private partnerships in the field of e-learning in Higher Education, maintaining a good level of public access to quality higher education as well as developing the opportunities opened by new partnerships and funding models. Interest and commitment of public and private parties will be decisive for selecting possible projects, as well as the contribution of such projects to the achievement of public interest objectives in educational and social fields.

d) **Networking virtual campuses initiatives.** This action will support the creation and dynamisation of networks of virtual campuses, fostering exchange of good practice and discussion of new models, challenges, and risks.

1.3. Action Line 3: "school twinning via Internet"

This action line should facilitate school twinings via the Internet, stimulating European schools to build pedagogical partnerships with schools elsewhere in Europe, fostering language learning and intercultural dialogue. The action will start with secondary schools; extension to other school levels may be considered in the future.

a) **Identification and analysis of existing initiatives.** This action should analyse existing practices, with a view to drawing relevant conclusions for the organisation of the new action. It will conclude in a series of reports on:

- Good demonstration projects on the contribution of educational multimedia and of communication networks for supporting school twinning, especially in the area of multilingual and multicultural projects.
- Guidelines for teachers on exploiting the potential of ICT for innovative co-operation methods, such as, for example, multidisciplinary approaches or the use of common teaching tools and resources.
- Identification of themes well suited to co-operation projects, in priority areas such as scientific education, artistic education, media literacy or the teaching of citizenship

- b) **Creation of a support network in co-operation with Member States.** This network would be formed by teachers or educators with experience in the area of European **co-operation**. It will provide pedagogical support and guidance; tools and services for partner search; and guidelines and methods for exchange of experience;
- c) **Creation of an Internet platform as a hub of the twinning action.** This action consists in the building of a multilingual website, as a platform for **co-operation** and communication between participants, and for showcasing good practice;
- d) **Promotion and communication actions.** Success of the initiative depends on a dynamic communication action, anchored in the website, and including, inter alia, design of an attractive visual image, publications, press releases, preparation of fact-sheets on schools projects, launching and closing events, competitions and awards.

1.4. Action Line 4: Transversal actions and monitoring of e-learning

In addition, funding will be given to transversal actions, such as:

- a) **Support active monitoring of the eLearning Action Plan.** This action would provide increased coherence and visibility to EU actions on e-learning, via the:
 - effective dissemination of relevant material, such as reports and studies, to the different target groups and programme participants;
 - clustering of projects addressing similar objectives or using similar methodologies;
 - supporting exchange of experience, peer-reviewing, networking and any other possible synergies within the Action Plan activities;
- b) **Maintenance of an eLearning Portal,** providing an easy, one-stop access to European activities in the fields of e-learning and to existing information sources, directories, data bases, or knowledge repositories; and facilitating user-friendly access to EU programmes, projects, studies, reports and working groups.
- c) **Organisation of an eLearning annual conference,** as a meeting point for assessment of progress and presentation of good projects demonstrating the added value of e-learning for different users and needs;
- d) **Awareness and information actions via European networks.** This action would support European networks in the field of e-learning, and relevant activities such as focussed conferences, seminars, or workshops on key e-learning themes such as quality assurance; and any other mechanisms for fostering European debate and exchange of good practice in this field;
- e) **Participation in international projects** related to good and effective use of ICT for education and training, such as, for example, those under way at the OECD (PISA), the IEA (TIMSS, SITES), or UNESCO (digital literacy)⁴⁷;

⁴⁷ PISA: Programme for International Student Assessment; TIMSS: Third International Mathematics and Science Study; SITES: Second Information Technologies in Education Study; and IEA: International association for the evaluation of educational achievement

- f) **Design and develop monitoring, analysis and forecasting tools** for e-learning in Europe, including the funding of specific surveys, studies and intelligence gathering activities on the real use of e-learning in the different educational contexts; this would form the basis of a virtual structure for provision of meaningful and timely information on e-learning in Europe, for academy, industry and policy-making needs in co-operation with Eurostat, the European Investment Bank and international organisations (e.g. OECD).

1.5. Technical support actions

In addition, the programme execution will be supported by actions aiming at the dissemination of results (eg publications, Internet referencing, showcasing projects and events), and, if necessary, by strategic studies addressing emerging problems or opportunities, or any other key issues for e-learning evolution in Europe. The programme will also support continuing feedback by users and participants, and its final external evaluation.

2. METHODS OF IMPLEMENTATION AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR BUDGET INTERVENTION

Funding will be granted following call for tenders and calls for proposals.

There will be a 100% financing for purchased services (such as studies, publications or experts) and possibly for the contribution to a future Executive Agency, which is under study.

Actions will be funded through:

- Subsidies covering a maximum of 80% of the eligible costs with other sources in the public and/or private sector for co-operation projects such as, for example, innovative projects of a structuring nature (action line 2);
- Subsidies covering a maximum of 80% of the eligible costs for eLearning partnerships led by Higher Education institutions, aiming at providing an “e-learning dimension” to existing agreements in the context of the Bologna process, and to new virtual models for European Higher Education (action line 2).
- 100 % financing of a support structure for school twinning, including a central web site; an European network for pedagogical support, in **co-operation** with Member States; promotion and dissemination actions; and any other necessary support action such as, for example, review of existing twinning schemes or production of an “ad hoc” partner search tool. Subsidies between 50 % and 80 % are foreseen to support the promotion and dissemination actions (action line 3).
- Subsidies between 50 and 80% of the costs linked to information and communication actions, such as conferences, seminars, visits, joint reports, peer reviewing and similar dissemination and knowledge sharing actions (action line 4).

The delivery mechanisms foreseen in the proposal follow broadly the usual Community approach to grants and co-funding on the basis of a detailed financial request. There will also be parts that are fully financed by the Community, such as the support network and the central web site for the school twinning action. Funding will be granted following calls for proposals and call for tenders.

The programme will be managed at central level by the Commission, with possible assistance from a future Executive Agency, the creation of which is currently under study. The appropriation is intended to cover expenditure for studies, meetings of experts, information, conferences and publications directly linked to the objective of the programme, plus any other expenditure on technical and administrative assistance not involving public authority tasks.

Some co-financed actions (eg action 3) could be carried out with specific networks (EUN, EUA) having a de facto monopoly. EUN is a network of ministries of education in all the Member States and in several applicant countries. EUA is the European Association of Universities, bringing together over 500 universities.

LEGISLATIVE FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Policy area(s): Education and culture

Activity(ies): Education

Title of action: Programme for the improvement of quality and accessibility of European education and training systems by an effective integration of information and communication technologies(eLearning Programme)

1. BUDGET LINE(S) + HEADING(S)

New budget line(s) : B3-1008 and B3-1008A

2. OVERALL FIGURES

2.1. Total allocation for action (Part B): € million for commitment

€ 36 million

2.2. Period of application:

From January 1st, 2004 to December 31st, 2006

2.3. Overall multi-annual estimate on expenditure:

- a) Schedule of commitment appropriations/payment appropriations (financial intervention)

€ million (to 3rd decimal place)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Commitments	9,670	10,670	11,660			32,000
Payments	5,624	9,094	10,978	4,926	1,378	32,000

- b) Technical and administrative assistance and support expenditure (see point 6.1.2.)

€ million (to 3rd decimal place)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Commitments	1,330	1,330	1,340			4,000
Payments	1,064	1,300	1,338	0,268	0,030	4,000

€ million (to 3rd decimal place)

Subtotal a+b	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Commitments	11,000	12,000	13,000			36,000
Payments	6,688	10,394	12,316	5,194	1,408	36,000

- c) Overall financial impact of human resources and other administrative expenditure (see points 7.2. and 7.3.)

€ million (to 3rd decimal place)

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Commitments/ payments	1,757	1,757	1,758			5,272

TOTAL a+b+c	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
Commitments	12,757	13,757	14,758			41,272
Payments	8,445	12,151	14,074	5,194	1,408	41,272

2.4. Compatibility with the financial programming and the financial perspective

- Proposal compatible with the existing financial programming
- This proposal will entail reprogramming of the relevant heading in the financial perspective.
- This may entail application of the provisions of the Interinstitutional Agreement.

2.5. Financial impact on revenue:

- No financial implications (involves technical aspects regarding implementation of a measure)

3. BUDGET CHARACTERISTICS

Type of expenditure		New	EFTA participation	Participation applicant countries	Heading Financial Perspective
NON-COMP	DIFF	YES	YES	YES	No 3

4. LEGAL BASIS

Articles 149 and 150 of the EC Treaty.

Decision no .../.../EC of the European Parliament and the Council, concerning the adoption of a multi-annual programme for the promotion of European models for the integration of information and communication technologies in education and training systems (eLearning)

5. DESCRIPTION AND GROUNDS

5.1. Need for Community intervention

5.1.1. Objectives pursued and community intervention

The programme's overall aim is the improvement of quality and accessibility of European education and training systems by an effective integration of new technologies (e-learning), supporting and complementing the actions of Member States in this field.

To this end, the programme will foster the creative and innovative use of ICT by education and training systems, as an important part of their adaptation of the knowledge society, and it will explore and promote ways and means of using e-learning for strengthening social cohesion and personal development, fostering intercultural dialogue and fighting the digital divide.

The programme also aims at developing the European dimension in education, by ensuring that all European pupils and students have, during their study period, the opportunity to participate in an European project, in co-operation with their peers in other European countries.

For Higher Education, the eLearning programme should contribute to reinforcing and extending the existing schemes for physical mobility and academic exchanges (Erasmus programme, Bologna process), and to making a virtual mobility alternative available to all those who for diverse reasons cannot benefit of real mobility.

For schools, the programme will launch and support a European-wide scheme for schools twinning via Internet, starting with secondary schools. This scheme will foster school twinning as a contribution to building a European dimension into education, as a stimulus to language learning, as an exercise in intercultural dialogue, and as a preparation for citizenship in the knowledge society.

Last, but not least, the programme will have a transversal action line, aiming at a dynamic dissemination and promotion of its objectives. This will be done in the first place in the context of the monitoring of the eLearning Action Plan, in co-operation with other community programmes and instruments relevant to eLearning. The programme will also foster the development of trans-national projects, the exchange of good practices, and the provision of information and communication platforms at the European level.

The specific objectives of the programme are as follows:

- To explore and to promote ways and means of using e-learning for strengthening social cohesion and personal development, fostering intercultural dialogue, and fighting the digital divide;
- To promote and develop the use of eLearning as an enabling factor for the implementation of the lifelong learning paradigm in Europe
- To exploit the potential of e-learning for enhancing the European dimension in education;
- To facilitate a more structured co-operation in the field of e-learning between the diverse Community programmes and instruments and Member States actions;
- To provide mechanisms for encouraging improvement of quality of products and services, for their effective dissemination, and for exchange of good practice.

In order to achieve this, the Community proposes to establish an action programme, which does not duplicate but rather complements other programmes at Community and Member State level. The programme will provide financial support with a view to generating:

- **Concerted actions** between the Commission, Member States, other education and innovation stakeholders, and experts and researchers in the field, to monitor, assess and disseminate national experiences and good practice in the use of **e-learning for fighting the digital divide**, providing relevant information for decision-making and good examples for interested actors;
- **Multilateral and multi-annual partnerships**, involving **Higher Education** establishments in Member States, other education and innovation stakeholders such as cultural and scientific institutions, public authorities, and industry, with the aim to reinforce European co-operation in the field of e-learning in Higher Education, and to help in the construction of a European Education Area, in particular in the fields of trans-European programmes for study, training and research, and of virtual mobility;
- **An European wide scheme for school twinning via Internet**, between schools in the different European countries, with the objective of ensuring that all pupils may benefit, during their school period, of a pedagogical relationship with a school elsewhere in Europe, thus fostering intercultural dialogue and language learning;
- The programme will support **transversal actions**: a framework for a better structured co-operation in the field of e-learning, in the context of the monitoring of the eLearning Action Plan, aiming at improved synergy between **community programmes and instruments**, and also between these programmes and national education and training systems. Actions under this line will, amongst other, facilitate contacts, monitoring, benchmarking and peer-reviewing exercises; joint or co-ordinated research projects; participation in international projects and surveys and dissemination of good European practice at large.

In addition, the programme will also provide technical assistance for studies , publications, joint development of communication actions, joint development of web-based and other tools for dissemination, promotion and support of actions and measures against the digital divide,

of trans-European education and training programmes, of virtual mobility schemes, and of any other creative and innovative use of e-learning in Europe.

The programme will operate in priority by building into what already exists, both at European and at Member State level. For awareness and communication actions, very important for fostering a wider and better use of e-learning, the programme will act, whenever possible, via well implanted European associations, networks and other forms of organised co-operation, as a more efficient way to reach out to the target groups.

5.1.2. Measures taken in connection with ex ante evaluation

The ex-ante evaluation covers a wide range of actions which took place during 1996 – 2002. The present proposal follows on from the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and to the Council establishing the eLearning Action Plan⁴⁸, which identifies a series of key actions for fostering the integration of ICT in education and training, in co-operation with and support of Member States actions to this end; from the Resolution from the Council on eLearning⁴⁹, which endorses the former Action Plan and actions taken so far, and which invites the Commission to continue and to step up its actions on this field; and from the Resolution of the European Parliament⁵⁰ asking for the development of a legal basis for further development of the eLearning initiative.

The drafting of this proposal has taken into account a substantial discussion involving Commission's services responsible for actions, related to the follow-up to eEurope and eLearning, such as Information Society, Employment, Industry and Eurostat Directorates-General, as well as with information and observation services such as Eurydice and OECD, and it draws on the diverse studies and reports produced by these services. A wide and effective take-up of e-learning⁵¹ is seen as an important contribution for the achievement of the ambitious objectives established by the EU for its education and training systems⁵² and for the development of the knowledge society in Europe.

It has also taken into account long and wide ranging discussions with Member States, in the context of the eLearning Working Group, and in the conferences and other events organised by the successive presidencies of the EU on use of ICT for education and training. Last, but not least, it draws on the conclusions of a series of "ad hoc" meetings held with experts in the key actions identifies by the eLearning Action Plan, such as virtual universities, teacher training, new learning environments or science education; with policy makers in third countries advanced in the use of ICT for education, such as Australia and Canada; and with the e-learning industry.

⁴⁸ COM (2001) 172 final

⁴⁹ OJ C 20.07.2001, p.3

⁵⁰ A5-0102/2001 Final

⁵¹ "e-learning" has become a generic concept, often also described as "blended learning", referring loosely to all kinds of technology-mediated support for learning. This includes a wide range of devices, from computers to digital television or radio, and an equally wide range of supports and services, and, in particular, the new dimension given to all these tools by their interconnectivity and accessibility via Internet. For the sake of consistency, in the context of this programme, the definition of the eLearning Action Plan "the use of new multimedia technologies and the Internet to improve the quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and services as well as remote exchanges and collaboration" will be used

⁵² COM (2001)59

As the **take-up of e-learning** increases, as our understanding of its strengths and weaknesses grows, and as the overall demand and European market for e-learning develops, attention must be given to issues of good use, such as **effectiveness, good practice, quality, and sustainability**; and to the underlying **organisational changes** required to fully exploit its benefits.

There is a need for more **innovation in the use of e-learning**, keeping abreast of advances in all related sectors, in particular of the rich ongoing **debate and research on the pedagogical use of new technologies**, which is often questioning the role of technology, and asserting the need not to forget the basics. It is also necessary to foster active **dissemination of the results of research** and observation to decision makers, to other researchers, and to practitioners in the field.

There is, in particular, an urgent need for **European quality contents and services**, and to search for ways and means to ensure their **inter-operability**; to increase their **visibility and accessibility**; and to improve the possibilities of their take-up by other interested users, via commercial and non-commercial distribution mechanisms. These efforts for knowledge creation and sharing must be done **respecting linguistic and cultural diversity**.

These specific needs are not adequately covered by existing Community programmes.

There is a specific line for education and training under the KA III Multimedia content and tools, of the IST programme; but it is focussed on “edge” technological research, such as, for example, GRID computing, and it does not have the necessary tools and mechanisms to ensure the effective dissemination of results to practitioners, with a view of facilitating their take-up by education systems. **There is a need for a well structured link between advanced research and take-up of e-learning by education and training systems.**

There are possibilities for ICT mediated projects under the education and training programmes Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci, in particular Socrates-Minerva action; but they focus on initial research and testing, and they do not provide the targeted research and more operational approach required for effective assessment and exploitation and take-up of e-learning. **There is a need for a specific complement to these programmes, aiming at an effective development and exploitation of e-learning possibilities.**

There are, finally, large financial resources for supporting the development of training and learning courses and materials under the European Social Fund, but they are geared to employment and other urgent social needs, they do not cover the full range of the spectrum of e-learning possibilities, and, in particular, they cannot give due attention to advanced pedagogical research. **There is a need to provide adequate pedagogical and personal development grounding to employment initiatives**, taking into account different learning styles, cultural and social barriers to learning, and issues linked to citizenship in the knowledge society, transcending purely instrumental job-related needs.

Two operational conclusions followed from all of the above:

- there is a consensus as to the **added value of the European dimension** for the development of ICT policy making in the field of ICT for education and training, and in particular for increased debate, information, and exchange of good practice
- there is a consensus as to the opportunity for a new Community instrument to address specific needs identified during the consultation process, in particular the integration of

e-learning aspects in the Bologna process, and to test new ways for Community actions in support of European co-operation in this field.

On the basis of the above and also taking into account the lessons drawn from other Community programmes, an ex-ante evaluation report based on the Guide on ex-ante evaluation (published by DG Budget in December 2001) was drawn up by the Commission's services. The content of this report has been fully integrated into the explanatory memorandum as well as into the financial statement.

5.1.3. Measures taken following ex post evaluation

The proposal builds on the experience gained through, and lessons drawn from programmes such as Socrates/Minerva; from specific multimedia actions such as CONNECT; as well as from other European Community programmes such as IST action KA III Multimedia content and tools, and eContent. This includes their external evaluation reports, as well as those established for e-learning related issues, such as, for example, the final report of the Task Force on Multimedia Educational Software.

This proposal takes also into account experience gained from the eLearning preparatory actions which has been undertaken in 2001 and 2002 and will be pursued in 2003. This experience reinforces the above conclusions about the need for a more flexible and targeted approach, better suited to e-learning, a new activity in fast evolution.

A further source of inspiration for the present proposal are the reports and analysis developed by European networks with solid experience in EU programmes. A last and fundamental source have been the policy documents and experience of Member States, discussed in detail in the meetings of the eLearning Working Group with Member States. Some of these have produced interesting evaluations of the first phases of their policies and actions for ICT in education.

The lessons from the past can be looked at from two different angles:

- a) lessons applicable to the design of the programme;
- b) lessons applicable to the administration of the programme.

As far as the design of the programme is concerned, the proposal is based on the well-proven value of the European networking fostered by the Community, for which the evaluation of programmes like Socrates and the reports mentioned in the above paragraph provide ample evidence.

As regard the administration of the programme, the Commission will keep in mind lessons from the past and the remarks echoed by the evaluations and audits. In implementing the programme, the Commission will seek to ensure that it remains as simple and user-friendly as possible, as this is crucial for its effectiveness and wide use throughout Europe. This will offer the opportunity to try out more flexible or simple modes of operation. Whenever possible and justifiable by a cost /effectiveness analysis, programme administration and other programme execution related tasks such as, for example, monitoring and documentation of project results, will be entrusted to a future Executive Agency, under study.

5.2. Actions envisaged and arrangements for budget intervention

The actions foreseen are:

1. Concerted actions for fighting the digital divide;
2. European Virtual Campuses;
3. A European “school twinning via Internet” action;
4. A transversal action building on the monitoring of the eLearning Action Plan; In addition, support for projects evaluation; information and communication services have to be provided.

Funding will be granted following call for tenders and calls for proposals.

There will be a 100% financing for purchased services (such as studies, publications or experts) and possibly for the contribution to a future Executive Agency, which is under study. Actions will be funded through:

- Subsidies covering a maximum of 80% of the eligible costs with other sources in the public and/or private sector for co-operation projects such as, for example, innovative projects of a structuring nature (action line 2);
- Subsidies covering a maximum of 80% of the eligible costs for eLearning partnerships led by Higher Education institutions, aiming at providing an “e-learning dimension” to existing agreements in the context of the Bologna process, and to new virtual models for European Higher Education (action line 2).
- 100 % financing of a support structure for school twinning, including a central web site; an European network for pedagogical support, in with Member States; promotion and dissemination actions; and any other necessary support action such as, for example, review of existing twinning schemes or production of an “ad hoc” partner search tool. Subventions between 50 % and 80 % are foreseen to support the promotion and dissemination actions (action line 3).
- Subsidies between 50 and 80% of the costs linked to information and communication actions, such as conferences, seminars, visits, joint reports, peer reviewing and similar dissemination and knowledge sharing actions (action line 4).

5.3. Methods of implementation

The delivery mechanisms foreseen in the proposal follow broadly the usual Community approach to grants and co-funding on the basis of a detailed financial request. There will also be parts that are fully financed by the Community, such as the support network and the central web site for the school twinning action. Funding will be granted following calls for proposals and call for tenders.

The programme will be managed at central level by the Commission, with possible assistance from a future Executive Agency, the creation of which is currently under study. The appropriation is intended to cover expenditure for studies, meetings of experts, information, conferences and publications directly linked to the objective of the programme, plus any other expenditure on technical and administrative assistance not involving public authority tasks.

Some co-financed actions (eg action 3) could be carried out with specific networks (EUN, EUA) having a de facto monopoly. EUN is a network of ministries of education in all the Member States and in several applicant countries. EUA is the European Association of Universities, bringing together over 500 universities.

6. FINANCIAL IMPACT

6.1. Total financial impact on Part B - (over the entire programming period)

6.1.1. Financial intervention

Commitments in € million (to the 3rd decimal place)

Breakdown	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
<i>Action 1: Fighting the digital divide</i>						
1.1 Understanding digital literacy: High Level Expert Group, funding of studies, targeted seminars, workshops, reports	0,540	0,540	0,520			1,600
1.2 Exchanges of good practice	0,740	1,030	1,230			3,000
1.3 Actions via European networks	1,140	1,500	1,860			4,500
<i>Action 2: European Virtual Campuses</i>						
2.1 Supplement to Bologna partnerships	0,500	0,500	0,500			1,500
2.2 Funding of Trans-national Virtual Campuses projects	2,000	2,000	2,000			6,000
2.3 Funding of new virtual models for European HE	0,500	0,500	0,500			1,500
2.4 Funding of Actions via European networks	0,250	0,500	0,750			1,500
<i>Action 3: European Schools twinning via Internet</i>						
3.1 European support network and partner finding tools	2,000	2,000	2,000			6,000
3.2 Multilingual Internet platform and technical support	0,450	0,500	0,550			1,500
3.3 Funding of promotional actions via the network	0,200	0,250	0,300			0,750
<i>Action 4: Transversal actions</i>						
4.1 Monitoring eLearning Action Plan : Projects clustering, website	0,650	0,550	0,550			1,750
4.2 Actions via European networks	0,500	0,500	0,500			1,500
4.3 Funding of international projects	0,200	0,200	0,200			0,600
4.4 Evaluation of the programme		0,100	0,200			0,300
TOTAL	9,670	10,670	11,660			32,000

6.1.2 *Technical and administrative assistance, support expenditure and IT expenditure (Commitment appropriations)*

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	Total
a) Executive Agency	0,300	0,300	0,300			0,900
b) Other technical and administrative assistance (web site, editorial services, projects evaluation, audits)	0,150	0,150	0,150			0,450
Subtotal 1	0,450	0,450	0,450			1,350
c) Meetings of experts and Conferences	0,080	0,080	0,080			0,240
d) Information, publications, communication, studies	0,800	0,800	0,810			2,410
Subtotal 2	0,880	0,880	0,890			2,650
TOTAL	1,330	1,330	1,340			4,000

6.2. Calculation of costs by measure envisaged in Part B (over the entire programming period)

Commitments in € million (to the 3rd decimal place)

Breakdown	Type of outputs (projects, files)	Number of outputs per year*	Average unit cost**	Total cost (total for 3 years)
Action 1: e-learning for fighting the digital divide	1.1 Understanding digital literacy: High Level Expert Group, funding of studies, targeted seminars, workshops, reports	8	0,066	1,600
	1.2 Exchange of good practice: -reports, case studies, research	8	0,125	3,000
	1.3 Actions via European networks	3	0,500	4,500
	Total digital divide action			9,100
Action 2: European Virtual Campuses	2.1 Support to the Bologna process	4	0,125	1,500
	2.2 Trans-national virtual campuses	4	0,500	6,000
	2.3 Virtual models for European HE	2	0,250	1,500
	2.4 Actions via European networks	2	0,250	1,500
	Total HE action			10,500
Action 3 : European Schools twinning via internet:	3.1 European support network and partner finding tools	Permanent activity	15*0,133	6,000
	3.2 Multilingual Internet platform and technical support	Permanent activity	0,500	1,500
	3.3 Funding of promotional actions via the network	1	0,250	0,750
	Total twinning action			8,250

Action 4 : Transversal actions	4.1 Monitoring eLearning Action Plan - projects clustering/exploitation, website	Permanent activity	0,100 initial cost 0,550 running	1,750
	4.2 Actions via European networks	2	0,250	1,500
	4.3 Funding international projects	2	0,100	0,600
	4.4 Evaluation of the programme	2	0,300 (total cost)	0,300
	Total transversal actions			4,150
TOTAL COST				32,000

* Annual target outputs

** The average unit cost has been calculated according to costs of similar past activities

Annual target outputs	2004	2005	2006	Total
Digital divide actions	16	16	16	48
eLearning partnerships for Higher Education	12	12	12	36
School twinning: participating schools	5,000	15,000	30,000	50,000
Transversal actions	6	6	6	18

Annual target outputs have been calculated according to the following overall distribution of the programme's budget:

- Digital divide actions : approx. 25% of the total budget
- eLearning partnerships for Higher Education: approx. 30% of total budget
- School twinning via Internet: approx. 25% of total budget
- Transversal actions and monitoring of eLearning: approx. 10% of total budget
- Technical and administrative assistance: approx. 10% of total budget.

The proportion of the budget allocated to 'technical support and information services' has not been predetermined but results from the type of identified actions, particularly those highlighted during discussions with partners with the aim of providing a programme offering a community added-value. In accordance with the ex-ante evaluation, it is a priority to build on what exists, and to disseminate information on the work done in the exploratory phase and by other community programs or Member States actions. This will also contribute to a better exploitation of the results of the existing projects, making them aware of the need to avoid reproducing what already exists, and building synergy. All those actions, can be considered as highly efficient in regard of the small amount allocated to them and to the expected multiplying effect at community level. Account should be taken of the limited amount available in the overall programme budget together with the fact that the amount allocated to these actions is small.

7. IMPACT ON STAFF AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENDITURE

7.1. Impact on human resources

Types of post		Staff to be assigned to management of the action using existing and/or additional resources		Total	Description of tasks deriving from the action
		Number of permanent posts	Number of temporary posts		
Permanent officials or Temporary staff	A	7		7	Policy development and programme management; financial and administrative management; secretarial support. This implies 2 additional posts compared to the 2003 foreseen resources
	B	3		3	
	C	3	1	4	
Other human resources					
Total		13	1	14	

7.2. Overall financial impact of human resources

Type of human resources	Amount €	Method of calculation
Officials	1 512 000	14x108 000
Temporary staff		
Other human resources		
Total	1 512 000	

7.3. Other administrative expenditure deriving from the action

Budget line (number and heading)	Amount €	Method of calculation
Overall allocation (Title A7)		
A0701 – Missions	25600	40 missions x 640* within EC
A07040 – Conference	200 000	Costs of similar large conferences at other DGs
A07031 – Compulsory committees	19200	2 annual meeting x 1 participant x 15 Member State x 640*
Information systems (A-5001/A-4300)		
Other expenditure - Part A (state which)		
Total	244800	

* Cost per unit

The amounts are total expenditure for twelve months. The figures above correspond to 2004. In the first year, the staff and administrative expenditure would grow comparatively faster than the budget of the programme.

The amounts are total expenditure for twelve months.

I.	Annual total* (7.2 + 7.3)	€ 1756800
II.	Duration of action	3 Years
III.	Total cost of action (taking into account progression)	€ 5272500

The needs for human and administrative resources shall be covered within the allocation granted to the managing DG in the framework of the annual allocation procedure.

8. FOLLOW-UP AND EVALUATION

8.1. Follow-up arrangements

The implementation of the programme, including monitoring, could be carried out by an Executive Agency, which should be operational from the start of the programme. It is expected that monitoring activities will not start until approximately twelve months after the launch of the programme. This time will be used to prepare tools for data collection and processing.

The ongoing monitoring of the programmes will be based on the information obtained directly from beneficiaries, which will submit interim and final activity and financial reports, including performance criteria set out in the selection process.

In order to ensure the quality of the execution of the programme, visits to the projects will be carried out on a regular basis, and regular feedback will also be requested on the activities of participants in the programme.

All projects and actions will include built-in evaluation, or provision for assessment by external experts or internal sources, and contain performance indicators and guidelines for follow-up.

For one-off projects, such as seminars and conferences, on-site monitoring will be undertaken, and external in-depth evaluation will be carried out on the basis of random samples and/or on the basis of risk factors.

8.2. Arrangements and schedule for the planned evaluation

An interim evaluation will be carried out on the second year of the programme. An *ex post* evaluation focused on the impact of the action in question will be carried out at the end of the programme.

For the purpose of evaluation, the following indicators have been identified:

General objectives	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Promotion of effective integration of information and communication technologies in European education and training systems, facilitating and stimulating co-operation and synergy between actions undertaken by Community programmes and by Member States. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quantitative/qualitative data on actions, reports and other results of these actions - Quantitative/qualitative data on participants' perceptions as to the impact of the programme;
Specific Objectives	Indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ To explore and to promote ways and means of using e-learning for strengthening social cohesion, fostering intercultural dialogue and enabling full citizenship in the knowledge society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improved perception and understanding of the potential of e-learning by participants to actions - Recommendations for future action
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ To promote and develop the use of eLearning for Higher Education as an enabling factor for the implementation of the lifelong learning paradigm in Europe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhanced and extended offer of quality e-learning resources by participants to programme actions - Quantitative data on access to those new resources - Impact perception of the major Higher Education associations & networks

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ To exploit the potential of e-learning for enhancing the European dimension in education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quantitative data on number of schools and pupils participating - Qualitative data on the perception of participating schools as to the effect of their involvement in the programme - Qualitative data on the integration of this practice in pedagogical terms and in school organisation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ To facilitate a more structured co-operation in the field of e-learning between the diverse Community programmes and instruments and Member States actions; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - data on added value as a result of clustered actions - increased exchanges between Member States
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ To provide mechanisms for encouraging improvement of quality of products and services and for effective dissemination and for exchange of good practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improvement of e-learning products and services quality via quality assurance criteria
Operational Objectives	Indicators
1. Fighting the digital divide	
1.1 Understanding digital literacy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Creating a network of high level experts. ▪ Workshops, seminars, targeted reports, studies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Existence of this high level group - Quantitative/qualitative data on the number of actions and of participants
1.2. Identification and dissemination of good practice in the use of e-learning for fighting the digital divide, in particular <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For those without access to ICT resources ▪ For users with social or cultural problems ▪ For addressing individual learning styles ▪ For special needs and handicapped users 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quantitative/qualitative data on the identified practices, on dissemination actions and on the number of people reached - Qualitative data on the perception of the added value of this community action by the selected projects
1.3. Awareness actions via the networking of digital divide initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quantitative/qualitative data on the participating networks and on their activities
2. European Virtual Campuses	
2.1. Development of e-learning aspects of the Bologna process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quantitative/qualitative data on the selected proposals
2.2 Funding of pilot projects for trans-national campuses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quantitative/qualitative data on the selected projects
2.3 Development of the new roles of universities in a lifelong learning paradigm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quantitative/qualitative data on the selected proposals and on their results
2.4 Networking virtual campuses initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Quantitative/qualitative data on the participating

	networks and on their activities
3. School twinning via Internet	
3.1 Identification and analysis of existing initiatives	- Quantitative/qualitative data on findings ;
3.2 Creation of a support network in Member States, including pedagogical material and guidance, and a partner-searching service	- Existence of the support network - Quantitative/qualitative data on its activities
3.3 Provision of a multilingual Internet platform for co-operation and dissemination of results	- Existence of the platform - Quantitative/qualitative data on use
3.4 Promotion and communication actions to launch and promote the action, through measures such as competitions, awards	- Quantitative data on promotion and communication actions
4 Transversal actions	
4.1 Monitoring of the eLearning Action Plan ▪ Definition of joint activities and common priorities ; co-ordination of Community activities, such as calls for proposals, studies, reports. ▪ Clustering of related projects – web site	- Quantitative/qualitative data on co-ordinated actions - Quantitative/quantitative data on projects and on clustering activities
4.2 Maintenance of an eLearning Portal	- Quantitative/qualitative data on contents, services and users
4.3 Annual eLearning Conference, highlighting successful projects and eLearning priorities such as digital literacy or public-private partnerships	- Quantitative/qualitative data on the conference and on participants
4.4 Awareness actions via European networks	- Quantitative/qualitative data on the networks selected and on their activities
4.5 Participation in international projects related to e-learning, eg with OECD, IEA, UNESCO	- Number and quality of the projects ; relevance of the results

9. ANTI-FRAUD MEASURES

Funding decisions and contracts between the Commission and the beneficiaries provide for *in situ* checks to be carried out on the premises of beneficiaries of a Community grant by the Commission and the Court of Auditors, and bestow the power to require evidence of any expenditure made under such contracts, agreements and legal undertakings within five years following the end of the contractual period. On-the-spot audits will be carried out when deemed necessary.

Beneficiaries are subject to reporting and financial accounting obligations, and these are analysed from the point of view of content and eligibility of expenditure, bearing in mind the purpose of the Community funding, and taking account of contractual obligations and of the principles of economy and sound financial management.

Appended to the financial agreements is information of an administrative and financial nature, designed to specify the kind of expenditure which is eligible under such agreements. Where appropriate, Community coverage of certain cost elements will be limited to items which are real, identifiable and verifiable in the beneficiary's book-keeping arrangements, so as to facilitate checking and auditing (and evaluation for selection purposes) of projects in receipt of funding.

As regard procurement, and as foreseen in the new Financial Regulations (art 93-96) administrative or financial penalties may be imposed by the Commission on candidates or tenderers who are in one of the case of exclusion foreseen.