



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 29.4.2003
COM(2003) 245 final
2002/0303 (COD)

Amended 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 pursuant to Article 250 (2)
of the EC Treaty)

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in Europe (eLearning Programme)**

1. BACKGROUND

Transmission of the Proposal to the to the EP and the Council (document COM(2002) 751 final - 2002/0303 (COD)):	19 December 2002
Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee:	26 March 2003
Opinion of the Committee of Regions:	10 April 2003
Opinion of the European Parliament - first reading:	8 April 2003

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE COMMISSION PROPOSAL

The objective of the proposal is to promote and facilitate the effective integration of information and communication technologies in European education and training systems, as a contribution to improving their quality and as an essential element of their adaptation to the needs of the knowledge society and of the European model of social cohesion. The term *e-learning* has become a shorthand to designate this integration, which should be understood as a new tool for education, complementing and enhancing existing ones. The programme proposal seeks to exploit the potential of e-learning for enhancing the European dimension in education and to facilitate a more structured co-operation in the field of e-learning between the diverse Community programmes and instruments and Member States actions;

3. COMMISSION OPINION ON THE AMENDMENTS ADOPTED BY THE PARLIAMENT

The Commission can accept fully or in the essence 24 of the 27 amendments adopted by the Parliament

3.1. Amendments fully accepted by the Commission

As regards the scope of the programme, there is a series of amendments stressing the importance of teacher training for the overall objectives of the eLearning programme, and of the e-twinning action area as a tool for « in-service » teacher training in the use of ICT and in European cooperation. Amendments 24 and 25 specify that the action will concern both primary and secondary schools (The term « schools » used on the proposal covers both levels; the reason for this amendment is to avoid confusions with the Barcelona Council conclusions, which refer specifically to secondary schools). Amendments 3 and 14 call for a proficient use of Internet, in a pedagogical, critical and responsible sense.

A second series of amendments introduce references to specific target groups, such as the disabled, rural areas, or immigrants, and to gender issues. These are amendments 2, 5 (only for the English version), 8, 10, 20 and 21.

As regards financing, amendments 1 and 7, call for keeping the programme's budget at the same level as preparatory actions and can be accepted. Amendment 17, a compromise amendment changes the Commission proposal, allocating a higher share of funding to the e-twinning schools in Europe action line and reducing consequently the percentage for action line 1 « e-learning for fighting the digital divide ». This change is in line with the discussion on the programme's priorities at the Council, at the European Social and Economic Committee, and at the Committee of the Regions, and the Commission is willing to accept it.

Amendment 9, adding to the programme's objectives the promotion of the development of high quality multimedia European software, contents and services, can also be accepted.

The same can be said for amendments 18 and 19, calling for simplification of the programme's management, and going in the same line as suggested by the Council.

Amendment 27 develops the concept of international cooperation, calling for attention to known good e-learning practice, namely to that of Australia, New Zealand and Canada. While this reference is not necessary, the Commission can accept the proposal of the rapporteur.

3.2. Amendments accepted in part or principle by the Commission

On the scope of the programme, amendment 11 develops the teacher training aspects of the schools twinning action, with a particular emphasis in the exchange of good practice and the development of cooperation at teacher level. While there is agreement in the essence, the proposed wording of the amendment is very long and has a repetitive sentence on good practice. It is proposed to shorten it and to eliminate this repetition. It is also proposed to take away the reference to « virtual training rooms », a concept that would present a problem for some Member States.

Commission suggests to reword as follows:

***e-twinning of schools in Europe and promotion of teachers' training:** Actions in this area will support and further develop existing schools and networking, to make it possible for all schools in Europe to build pedagogical partnerships with a school elsewhere in Europe ; to promote innovative cooperation methods and transfer quality educational approaches and reinforce language learning and intercultural dialogue; Actions in this area will also address teachers' and trainers' skills in the pedagogical and collaborative use of ICT through an exchange of good practices and the setting up of transnational and multidisciplinary projects.*

Amendment 6, introducing in the recitals a call for fast European action concerning virtual campuses, in particular in the context of mobility programmes, is acceptable in the essence. However, it is proposed to delete the reference to "programmes existing or in the pipeline such as Erasmus Mundus" as this would presuppose the adoption of the said programme and to reword the reference to "curricula" for which the Commission has no competence.

The first part of amendment 12, including the objective of promoting the development of high quality multimedia European software, contents and services within “*Action area d) transversal actions*” can be accepted. However, it is proposed to delete the second part, referring to the “*promotion of research, development, distribution and marketing*” as commercial actions are beyond the scope of education and training programmes.

Amendment 13, adding an explanation of *sustainability* can be accepted, but it is proposed to reduce it to the essence, to avoid unnecessary complication of the text. Proposed wording is as follows “*beyond the end of the programme*”.

Amendment 15, on gender strategy, can be accepted in the essence, but it is suggested to reword it, to ensure the coherence of policy levels, as follows :

(b) *seek synergies with other Community programmes and actions in the field of education, research, social policy (including the strategy on gender mainstreaming) and regional development;*

Amendment 22, adding the word *common* to the trans-national diplomas proposed in action area 2 *virtual campuses* is not strictly necessary, as this is the essence of the action, but it can be accepted.

Amendment 26, asking for the development of new technologies related to translating and interpreting languages addresses a cannot be accepted verbatim, as it refers to research activities. It is suggested to reword it as follows:

d a) *Support of projects for the test and evaluation of new technologies related to translating and interpreting languages for use in disseminating knowledge and in training*

3.3. Amendments not accepted by the Commission

Amendment 4 states the importance of digital television, and calls for guaranteeing interoperability in accordance with Article 18 of the Directive on a common regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services (Framework Directive). While fully agreeing with the essence of the amendment, the actions called for are beyond the competences of education and training programmes. This amendment is therefore rejected.

Amendment 16 proposes an augmentation of the total budget from 36 Meuro to 54 Meuro, in agreement with the spirit of amendments 1 and 7. However, at this stage, the Commission must stay with its original proposal.

Amendment 23 asking for « *European teacher training programmes* » cannot be accepted. Teacher training is an exclusive competence of Member States.

3.4. Amended proposal

Having regard to Article 250, paragraph 2, of the EC Treaty, the Commission modifies its proposals as indicated above.