


# Procedure file

Basic information		
CNS - Consultation procedure Decision	2000/0128(CNS)	Procedure completed
Information society, eContent: European digital content, linguistic diversity. 2001-2004 programme		
Subject 3.30.06 Information and communication technologies, digital technologies 3.30.25.02 Information programmes and action plans 4.40.08 Language learning, regional and local languages		

Key players			
European Parliament	Committee responsible		Rapporteur
	ITRE Industry, External Trade, Research, Energy		Appointed 13/09/2000
			PSE <a href="#">GILL Neena</a>
	Committee for opinion		Rapporteur for opinion
	BUDG Budgets		Appointed 14/09/2000
			GUE/NGL <a href="#">SEPPÄNEN Esko</a>
	ECON Economic and Monetary Affairs		The committee decided not to give an opinion.
	JURI Legal Affairs and Internal Market		17/10/2000
			PPE-DE <a href="#">FOURTOU Janelly</a>
	EMPL Employment and Social Affairs		06/09/2000
Council of the European Union			ELDR <a href="#">CAVERI Luciano</a>
	CULT Culture, Youth, Education, Media and Sport (Associated committee)		10/10/2000
			GUE/NGL <a href="#">FRAISSE Geneviève</a>
European Commission	Council configuration		Meeting
	Telecommunications		<a href="#">2325</a>
	Telecommunications		<a href="#">2293</a>
Commission DG		Commissioner	
<a href="#">Communications Networks, Content and Technology</a>			

Key events			
24/05/2000	Legislative proposal published	COM(2000)0323	Summary
03/10/2000	Debate in Council	<a href="#">2293</a>	

06/10/2000	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
05/12/2000	Vote in committee		Summary
05/12/2000	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	<a href="#">A5-0390/2000</a>	
13/12/2000	Debate in Parliament		
14/12/2000	Decision by Parliament	<a href="#">T5-0578/2000</a>	Summary
22/12/2000	Act adopted by Council after consultation of Parliament		
22/12/2000	End of procedure in Parliament		
18/01/2001	Final act published in Official Journal		

### Technical information

Procedure reference	2000/0128(CNS)
Procedure type	CNS - Consultation procedure
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Decision
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 57; EC Treaty (after Amsterdam) EC 157-p3
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ITRE/5/13615

### Documentation gateway

Legislative proposal		<a href="#">COM(2000)0323</a> <a href="#">OJ C 337 28.11.2000, p. 0031 E</a>	24/05/2000	EC	Summary
Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report		<a href="#">CES1431/2000</a> <a href="#">OJ C 116 20.04.2001, p. 0030</a>	29/11/2000	ESC	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		<a href="#">A5-0390/2000</a> <a href="#">OJ C 232 17.08.2001, p. 0010</a>	05/12/2000	EP	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		<a href="#">T5-0578/2000</a> <a href="#">OJ C 232 17.08.2001, p. 0205-0331</a>	14/12/2000	EP	Summary
Committee of the Regions: opinion		<a href="#">CDR0316/2000</a> <a href="#">OJ C 144 16.05.2001, p. 0038</a>	14/12/2000	CofR	
Follow-up document		<a href="#">COM(2003)0591</a>	10/10/2003	EC	Summary

### Additional information

European Commission	<a href="#">EUR-Lex</a>
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### Final act

[Decision 2001/48](#)  
[OJ L 014 18.01.2001, p. 0032](#) Summary

## programme

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**PURPOSE :** to present a Multiannual Community programme to stimulate the development and use of European digital content and to promote linguistic diversity. **CONTENT :** Digital content plays a predominant role in the evolution towards an information society, substantially contributing to economic growth and employment, and enhancing the professional, social and cultural developments of the citizens of Europe. The multiannual programme is designated the European Digital Content for Global Networks ("the programme") and has the following objectives: - creating favourable conditions for the commercialisation, distribution and use of European digital content on the global networks, thus stimulating economic activity and enhancing employment prospects; - stimulating the use of Europe's content potential, and in particular public sector information; - promoting multilingualism in digital content on the global networks and increasing the export opportunities of European content firms and in particular SME's through linguistic customisation; - contributing to the professional, social and cultural development of the citizens of the Union and facilitating the economic and social integration of citizens in the candidate countries in the information society. To attain these objectives, the following actions will be undertaken: - stimulating the exploitation of public sector information; - enhancing linguistic and cultural customisation - supporting market enablers, which includes bridging the funding gap and rights trading; - support actions. The programme will run from 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2005. The total budget requested is EUR 5 million.?

## Information society, eContent: European digital content, linguistic diversity. 2001-2004 programme

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The committee adopted the report by Neena GILL (PES, UK) amending the proposal under the consultation procedure. The committee wanted the programme to be reduced from 5 to 4 years, the budget to be increased to EUR 170m and the balance between the financial instruments within the programme to be changed. For example, it felt that more funding should be earmarked for improving linguistic and cultural customisation (i.e. tailoring products to different countries and cultures), while funding for stimulating the exploitation of public sector information should be reduced, on the grounds that this should be left more to market forces. It underlined the importance of safeguarding cultural diversity, protecting personal data, the need for the Commission to improve payments procedures and the importance of observing the subsidiarity principle. It also wanted Parliament to be included in the high level group which would evaluate the achievements of the programme, and called on the Commission to present more frequent evaluation reports for such a rapidly-evolving sector.?

## Information society, eContent: European digital content, linguistic diversity. 2001-2004 programme

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The European Parliament agreed on a number of amendments, (which were expressed by the committee responsible, refer to the previous document), to the text drafted by Mrs Neena GILL (PES, UK). ?

## Information society, eContent: European digital content, linguistic diversity. 2001-2004 programme

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**PURPOSE :** to adopt a multiannual Community programme (2001-2005) which aims to promote the use of European digital content on global networks (the eContent Programme). **COMMUNITY MEASURE :** Council Decision 2001/48/EC concerning the adoption of a multiannual Community Programme aiming to strengthening the use and development of European digital content on global networks as well as promoting linguistic diversity in the information society. **CONTENT :** the eContent Programme covers the period from 18.01.2001 to 17.01.2005 and has a budget of EUR 100 million for the that period. It is made up of 4 main objectives: - to help stimulate the use of and access for all to the Internet by increasing the availability of European digital content on the global networks to support the professional, social and cultural development of the citizens of the European Union and facilitating the economic and social integration of nationals of the applicant countries into the information society; - to stimulate access to and use of European digital content potential and especially promoting more effective use of information held by the public sector; - to promote cultural diversity and multilingualism, especially in the languages of the European Union, in digital content on the global networks and increasing the export opportunities of European content firms, and in particular SMEs through culture and linguistic customisation; - to create favourable conditions for the reduction of market fragmentation for the marketing distribution and use of European digital content on the global networks to stimulate economic activity and enhance employment prospects. In order to attain these objectives, 3 action lines are provided, accompanied by support actions written in the Annex of the decision: 1) improve access to and expanding use of public sector information; 2) enhance content production in a multilingual and multicultural environment; 3) increasing dynamism of the digital content market. An Annex to the programme sets out an indicative breakdown of expenditure. The Commission is responsible for the implementation of the eContent programme and its coordination. Moreover, the selected beneficiaries shall submit a report to the Commission. It should be noted that participation in the programme may be opened to legal entities established in EFTA States which are members of the European Economic Area (EEA). The programme shall also be open to CEECs countries and also Cyprus, Malta and Turkey, in accordance with bilateral agreements to be concluded. Participation may also be opened without financial support by the Community from the programme, to legal entities established in third countries and international organisations. **ENTRY INTO FORCE :** 22.12.2000. The Decision shall apply from 18.01.2001.?

## Information society, eContent: European digital content, linguistic diversity. 2001-2004 programme

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This Communication concerns the mid term evaluation of the eContent programme (2001 -2004). The evaluation was carried out by a consortium of companies. During the years 2001-2002, 58 projects were co-financed, involving over 468 organisations. The evaluators formulated recommendations for the second part of the current programme as well as giving indications for a possible continuation of the

activities. The key evaluation findings are as follows: The benefits of the programme are significant in comparison with the level of resources allocated to it. The programme fulfils the role of demonstrating the potential economic benefits of information held by the public sector as well as increased market access opportunities provided by linguistic and cultural adaptation of digital content to target audiences. The evaluators recognised the positive impact of the current programme and expressed a clear recommendation to continue supporting digital content via Community policies and programmes. More specifically it was concluded that: - the programme intervention logic was well designed, with a hierarchy of objectives ranging from the political framework of facilitating "access for all" to the Internet, through the operational goals of the action lines and the results expected from the individual projects selected; - the programme stimulated projects that would not have happened in the same form or with the same transnational dimension, thereby showing a high level of additionality and good use of public funds; - the programme reached its target audience, mainly SMEs, representing 43% of the participants, followed by public sector organisations (40 %). In terms of funding, 44% went to SMEs, with 29% being received by companies employing less than 50 people; - the programme was overall well managed. The paper goes on to make some recommendations for the implementation of the eContent programme, and to make suggestions for a follow-up programme. The Commission responds to the recommendations, and invites the European institutions to: - recognise of the role of digital content as a means to increase access to information by the citizens and to stimulate the economic and social development of European businesses; - support the role of the eContent programme as supporting demonstrators for the reuse of public sector information and the creation of European multilingual and multicultural content. ?