



Workability Europe Public Affairs e-bulletin

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Social Affairs

2009 to be the European Year of Creativity and Innovation

The European Commission welcomes the news that the European Parliament, meeting in plenary session in Brussels, has, by adopting its report, supported the Commission proposal that 2009 be designated as the European Year of Creativity and Innovation.

Each Member State will designate a national coordinator who will be responsible for the Year's activities at national or regional level. The Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture will coordinate the activities at the European level. Details of Year, including a rolling programme of events, will be made known through a website which the Commission will be launching soon.

No additional budget line has been provided, as the aim is to use existing resources for a wide-ranging awareness-raising effort and policy debate at European, national and regional level. This debate will help to shape Europe's agenda for cooperation in the field of education and culture over the coming decade.

Pending the launch of a specific website, interested organisations and stakeholder groups can request additional information from the following email address:

eac-EYCI2009@ec.europa.eu

Equality put at heart of EU social agenda

400 high-ranking delegates discussed on September 29th the next steps in the EU's strategy to tackle discrimination at the second annual European Equality Summit in Paris. A key element of the discussions will be the European Commission's proposal from July 2008 to

extend existing EU protection from discrimination to areas like access to goods and services, education and healthcare. Equality ministers and stakeholders – NGOs, social partners, companies and independent equality bodies from around Europe – will be able to give their views on the proposal, and also follow up on the commitments made by EU countries as part of the European Year of Equal Opportunities for All in 2007.

The Summit, co-organised by the French EU Presidency and the Commission, follows a similar event held in January 2007 in Berlin. It aims to follow up on the commitments undertaken during the European Year of Equal Opportunities, in particular a resolution adopted by national ministers in November 2007. It will also give fresh impetus to anti-discrimination efforts by creating a longer term perspective, including the next summit under the Swedish Presidency in 2009.

The European Year gave a new boost to the fight against discrimination in Europe by mobilising and strengthening cooperation between all the equality players through around 1,000 specific projects in 30 countries. It also helped raise awareness among Europeans of their rights to equal treatment and a life without discrimination.

Internet:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=88&langId=en&eventsId=108&furtherEvents=yes>

Discrimination and diversity – Journalist Award launched

The European Commission has launched the latest edition of its "For Diversity. Against Discrimination." Journalist Award. For the fifth successive year, submissions are invited for this European competition which honours journalists from both online and printed media. The award showcases the talents of those media

professionals who, through their writing, contribute to a better understanding of the benefits of diversity and the fight against discrimination – on the basis of religion or belief, disability, age, sexual orientation, race or ethnic origin.

Articles published between 1 January and 31 October 2008 in either print or online media within the EU are eligible for the competition and can be submitted online. At the end of the entry period, national juries will gather in all 27 EU Member States to select winning articles. From these 27 national winners, a jury will then choose the best three articles and the overall European Journalist Award winner. The winners will receive prizes worth up to €4 500.

As in previous years, the European Commission is dedicating a Special Award to one specific theme. This year's Special Award will focus on articles examining discrimination against the Roma community.

Internet:

<http://journalistaward.stop-discrimination.info>,
http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_296_en.pdf,
http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/flash/fl_232_en.pdf

Sport: foster social inclusion of people with disabilities

On the occasion of an official visit to Beijing to attend the Paralympic Games, the European Commissioner responsible for sport, Ján Figel', today signed a Joint Declaration with the President of the European Paralympic Committee (EPC), Mr Enrique Sánchez-Guijo. The declaration celebrates the granting of financial support to the EPC through the "Europe for Citizens" programme of the European Union. In conformity with the Paralympic values promoted by the EPC, this support comes as recognition of the importance of sport in strengthening social integration and supporting the

active involvement of all citizens in the process of European construction.

The Beijing declaration supporting Paralympic Sport and the work of the European Paralympic Committee recalls the important role played by civil society organisations in bringing Europe closer to its citizens with disabilities and enabling them to participate fully in society.

The main EU-level instrument for coordinating efforts to improve the life of disabled people is the European Disability Strategy. Its ultimate objective is to promote equality of opportunities and to facilitate access to rights for all people with disabilities.

These principles are implemented through the European Disability Action Plan, which ensures an effective follow-up to the 2003 European Year of People with Disabilities and provides a valuable framework for ensuring continual dialogue with the main stakeholders, as well as relevant and targeted initiatives.

The White Paper on Sport, adopted by the Commission in 2007, reaffirms these principles and invites the relevant players, notably EU Member States and local authorities, to do their best to adapt sport infrastructures to take into account the needs of people with disabilities. In the White Paper, the Commission also encourages the training of monitors, volunteers and staff, so that sportspeople with disabilities can practice their favourite discipline under the best conditions.

Internet:

http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/index_en.html,
http://ec.europa.eu/sport/index_en.htm,
<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=429&langId=en>

"European Civic Days"

The European Commission is launching a new series of events concentrating on European citizenship. The first will be the "European Civic Days", taking place in La

Rochelle, France, from 4 to 6 September 2008. More than 1,500 people are expected to participate in this event, which will discuss European citizenship and strengthening civil dialogue in Europe.

It will bring together a wide range of interested parties from associations and non-governmental organisations, officials from local, regional, national and European institutions as well as specialists on European citizenship. Focussing on mobility, the programme includes exchanges, discussions, workshops and examples of concrete initiatives and best practices.

The EU and its Member States have recognised the need for greater involvement of European citizens in the construction of Europe. The EU programme "Europe for citizens" promotes civic participation, the emergence of a sense of belonging to the European project, the development of a European identity as well as tolerance and mutual understanding.

As of September 2008, it will support two major citizenship events a year, one under each presidency of the EU.

The organisation of the first such event has been entrusted to the European Civic Forum, in the context of the French EU presidency. These "European Civic Days" are organised in La Rochelle under the slogan "Mobility, Dialogue and Participation: towards an active European citizenship". The inaugural ceremony and the opening of a 'European village of associations' on 4 September will be followed by thematic workshops, showcasing examples of concrete actions.

Internet:

<http://www.forumciviqueeuropeen.org/inscriptionfce.php?lang=en>

European Year of Intercultural Dialogue: 'Cultures on my street' photo competition

The European Commission received more than 2,000 photographs in response to its invitation launched in March to portray the theme of cultures meeting and mixing in concrete neighbourhoods.

It was an encouragement to all EU residents to express their own view of what intercultural dialogue means, under the broad title of "Cultures on my street". The winners have been selected by a jury and are announced today by Ján Figel', European Commissioner for Education, Training, Culture and Youth.

The four best entries and a shortlist of runners-up were revealed today at the award ceremony in the Berlaymont building (1st floor) at 12.30. The winning photos and further 21 short listed photographs also form part of the exhibition inaugurated by Commissioner Figel which will be displayed on the Berlaymont building esplanade until 31 October and then travel around Europe.

More info: www.dialogue2008.eu

Employment

Programme of traineeships for people with disabilities

The European Parliament is offering paid traineeships to persons with disabilities, as a positive action measure aimed at facilitating the integration of disabled people in the workplace.

These traineeships are open both to graduates of universities or equivalent institutions and to people whose qualifications are below university level. (Article 18 of the Internal Rules Governing Traineeships and Study Visits in the Secretariat of the European Parliament which concerns the academic qualifications needed for admission to a paid traineeship thus does not apply to this programme.)

The main purpose of this programme is to offer a number of people with disabilities

a meaningful and valuable work experience, and an opportunity to familiarise themselves with the activities of the European Parliament.

Paid traineeships are awarded for a period of five months which cannot be extended.

Starting dates and application periods:

- 1 March / 15 August – 15 October (midnight);
- 1 October / 15 March – 15 May (midnight)

Applicants for this programme must:

- be nationals of a Member State of the EU or of an applicant country;
- be over 18 years of age on the traineeship starting date;
- have a thorough knowledge of one of the official languages of the EU and a good knowledge of a second;
- not have been awarded any other paid traineeship, or have been in paid employment for more than four consecutive weeks, with a European institution or a Member or political group of the European Parliament;
- be able to certify that they have a disability/ies (medical certificate or disability certificate/card issued by a national authority).

Contact traineeships Office:

stages@europarl.europa.eu

Internet:

<http://www.europarl.europa.eu/parliament/public/staticDisplay.do?id=147&pageRank=4&language=EN>

Mission promotes 'flexicurity' approach to boosting jobs and growth

The European Union has launched an initiative that will help Member States to implement 'flexicurity' – the principle which seeks to balance flexibility in the jobs market with improved employment security for workers.

The EU's Flexicurity Mission spoke to businesses, employee organisations, social partners and national governments during a series of visits held over summer 2008. The mission was led by Vladimír Špidla, European Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunity. It also included representatives from European industry and the unions, along with the Slovenian and French EU presidencies.

Visits to France, Sweden, Finland, Poland and Spain gave the mission the chance to raise awareness of flexicurity issues and to see how different countries are developing relevant employment and social policies. The mission's findings and examples of good practice will be published in a report due out in December 2008.

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=370&langId=en&featuresId=13&furtherFeatures=yes>

Competition "Handinnov Europe 2008": Europe-wide for the first time

Handinnov Europe 2008" will reward innovative actions to promote the inclusion of young disabled persons in the area of education.

For its 5th edition, Handinnov competition is one of the official events of the French Presidency of the European Union.

It is therefore open in each of the 27 States of the Union thanks to the support of leading personalities, the official partners, and the network "European Disability Forum".

In November 2008, all the prize-winners from the 27 countries will be invited to participate in several prestige events in Paris in the presence of French and European leading political figures.

Competition "Handinnov Europe 2008": Europe-wide for the first time

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=88&langId=en&eventsId=103&furtherEvents=yes>

Education, vocational training & youth

EuroSkills 2008 - a showcase of Europe's best in vocational education and training

Under the slogan "Skills for a strong Europe" the first ever Europe-wide skills competition will bring together hundreds of talented and skilled young people from across Europe. Aimed at students and graduates in vocational education and training (VET), EuroSkills 2008 is hosting a series of competitions and demonstrations at Rotterdam's Ahoy arena, between 18 and 20 September 2008. A total of 49 trades are being showcased, covering a vast array of professions such as florists and web designers, electricians, motorcycle technicians and nurses. The event is organised by the European Skills Promotion Organisation (ESPO), in cooperation with Skills Netherlands. The European Commission is supporting the organisation of EuroSkills 2008 through funds from the Lifelong Learning Programme.

EuroSkills aims to raise the profile, quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training systems, by creating a platform to demonstrate, test, compare and improve general skills and competence levels of the future labour force. With its competitions, EuroSkills is also a way of promoting excellence and recognising the talent of Europe's best trainees and graduates.

EuroSkills 2008 will also gather relevant stakeholders in the field of vocational education and training to engage in a debate around the development of skills for employability and mobility. They will touch upon the latest tools and initiatives developed and implemented at European level in cooperation with Member States, such as the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and the

newly-launched 'New Skills for New Jobs' agenda, initiatives that address the needs of workers, companies and learners alike.

The EuroSkills event is being organised by a newly established association, the European Skills Promotion Organisation (ESPO), in cooperation with Skills Netherlands. The European Commission is supporting the organisation of the event through funds from the Lifelong Learning Programme. A total of 31 European countries, including all EU Member States with the exception of Romania, are currently members of the ESPO association.

EuroSkills is intended to become a regular event, to be hosted by a different European country every two years, with the aim of promoting both vocational skills and vocational education and training across Europe.

Internet: <http://www.euroskills2008.eu>,
http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc60_en.htm

Leonardo da Vinci project "About Ageing at Work"

AGEING AT WORK is a two years project (2008-2009) within the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci Lifelong Learning Programme 2007-2013 of the European Commission.

The project is being led by Prevent in Belgium and has partners in Greece (EWORX), Ireland (WRC), the Netherlands (TNO and Hogeschool Utrecht) and Poland (NIOM).

The project aims at producing, testing and promoting a training for HR professionals on age management with a particular focus on health (i.e. integrated workplace health management).

In a first phase, a questionnaire survey of user needs will be undertaken in Belgium, the Netherlands, Ireland and Poland. In

addition, a literature review on the concerning topics (older workers and age management, workplace health management) will be carried out.

Based on the outcomes of the needs analysis and literature review, a training will be developed in a second phase. This training addresses HR professionals from all businesses (all branches, public or private), and will exist of a face-to-face training course as well as an integrated e-learning support environment. The training concept will be tested in Belgium, the Netherlands and Poland through a pilot training.

Internet:

<http://www.ageingatwork.eu/?i=ageingatwork.en.about>

Research

New guide to help better use of European funding

The Commission launched the 'Practical Guide to EU funding opportunities for Research and Innovation' to help all stakeholders to find their way into the different existing EU funding. Central to the realisation of the goals of the Lisbon Agenda is the need to promote the knowledge economy, in particular through research, technological development and innovation (RTDI). EU support for RTDI is provided mainly through the 7th Research Framework Programme, the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme and the Structural & Cohesion Funds. If their impact is to be maximised, it is essential that these sources of funding are used in a coherent way.

From today, the official text of the Practical Guide is available for download in English from CORDIS, the official portal of FP7: http://cordis.europa.eu/EU-funding-guide/home_en.html

A European research and innovation strategy for ICT: time horizon 2020

In search of the best strategies to boost Europe's leadership in ICT (Information and Communications Technology) research and innovation in the next decade, the European Commission today launched a public consultation. Contributions from industry, ICT experts, policy-makers and the wider public will be fed into a new strategy for ICT research and innovation, to be unveiled next year. The aim is to put European ICT industry, especially SMEs, to the fore of the race for global competitiveness. The public consultation is open until 7 November 2008.

This consultation is part of the European Commission's response to the recent expert report headed by former Finnish Prime Minister Esko Aho (MEMO/08/430), which points out a number of key failings of ICT research and innovation in Europe. In particular, Europe is underperforming in both the level and intensity of its research and innovation investments: today, 33% of research and innovation in developed economies worldwide is in ICT, while in Europe it accounts for less than 25%, mainly because it is highly fragmented. Furthermore, the EU represents 32% of the global ICT market, but European firms only take up 22% of the global market.

Internet:

<http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form=ICTRDI>

Other EU-Affairs

EU-wide public consultation on the future of youth policy

The European Commission has launched an online public consultation on how the EU's youth policy should develop in the future. This year, the EU's Youth policy is celebrating its 20th anniversary, and this

consultation will help the Commission to evaluate the achievements of European cooperation on youth policy since 2000. In the months to come, it will also lead to definition of fresh objectives for the next decade.

The consultation seeks to answer questions about the main challenges or opportunities which will have the most direct impact on young people. The questionnaire will cover issues regarding education and informal learning, employment, discrimination, social integration and voluntary activities of young people. The results of the consultation will be taken on board by the European policymakers in order to prepare concrete measures to help young people integrate into society, find work, improve their general well-being and get involved in society as citizens.

The consultation is addressed both to individuals and organisations which are interested in the future of young people.

Internet.:

http://ec.europa.eu/youth/youth-policies/doc1220_en.htm.

JASMINE initiative to develop micro-finance institutions in Europe

The European Commission and the EIB Group (the European Investment Bank and the European Investment Fund) have developed a joint action known by the acronym JASMINE (Joint Action to Support Micro-finance Institutions in Europe).

- This initiative provides, on the one hand, for the provision of technical assistance to micro-finance institutions (MFIs) to help them to become credible financial intermediaries and obtain capital more easily. The "JASMINE" unit to be created within the European Investment Fund (EIF) will be responsible for vetting the business plans of applicant MFIs and helping them to achieve a high level of

quality as regards their governance, financial management and commercial policy. The aim is to motivate these institutions to adopt good practices so that they can be awarded quality labels. JASMINE will also help to create training courses and publicity campaigns on the European micro-finance initiative for the Member States, the regions, the banks and micro-finance institutions.

- Another aspect is to finance operations by the most promising non-bank institutions so that they can grant more loans to project promoters. The JASMINE unit will examine the viability of applications and will make proposals concerning the cofinancing of these operations by the EIB and private partners.

Internet:

http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/funds/2007/jij/micro_en.htm,
<http://www.european-microfinance.org>

EU funded programmes

- 7th Framework Programme: **several open calls in the field of health, ICT...**
- Citizens for Europe: **Calendar 2008-2013**
- YOUTH IN ACTION: **Guidelines 2008**
- Call for expressions of interest of a list of health-field experts:
http://ec.europa.eu/phea/phea_ami/,
http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_programme/ami/ami_036831_en.htm

Calendar of upcoming events

Date	Title	Venue	Contact
4/10/2008	Deaf parenting UK Conference : Empowering, Enabling and Supporting Deaf Parents	Birmingham (UK)	http://www.deafparent.org.uk Email : info@deafparent.org.uk
23-24/10/2008	Assistive Technologies in the Labour Market – Thinking beyond access : the benefits and limits of AT for people with disabilities	Prague (Czech Republic)	Participants from Central and Eastern Europe are encourage to participate. Further information : conference@diakonie.at
24-27/10/2008	European Congress “Living in the encounter”	The Hague (NL)	More information : www.in-der-begegnung-leben.eu
29-30/10/2008	French EU Presidency Conference: “A European approach for the enrolment of students with disabilities”	Clermont-Ferrand (FR)	http://www.ue2008.fr
29-30/10/2008	European Conference “Protecting and promoting the rights of persons with disabilities in Europe: towards full participation, inclusion and empowerment”	Strasbourg (FR)	Council of Europe For further information : disability@coe.int
10-14/11/2008	Course “Juticiability of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights : Theory and Practice”	Turku/Abu (Finland)	Deadline for applications : 15 September 2008 http://www.abo.fi/instut/imr/courses.htm
21/11/2008	European Conference: “The new approach to State aids – recent reforms under the State Aid Action Plan and next steps”	Brussels (Belgium)	Registration and further information: COMP-STATE-AID-CONFERENCE@ec.europa.eu
1-2/12/2008	European Day of People with Disabilites (EDPD) Conference	Brussels (Belgium)	Contacts soon available
11/12/2003	EPR Public Affairs Event: commemorate the European Platform for Rehabilitation's 15th Anniversary, launch the EPR Charter on Modernisation of disability-related Health and Social Services and to showcase the latest achievements in the European Quality in Social Services (EQUASS) system.	Théâtre du Vaudeville, in Brussels	Jan Spooren, European Platform for Rehabilitation – EPR, www.epr.eu