Education, training and new technologies: eLearning initiative and action plan 2001-2004

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The committee adopted the report by Mario MAURO (EPP-ED, I), thereby throwing its weight behind the e-Learning initiative, which it regarded as a top priority in the field of education. The committee stressed the importance of exchanges of best practice at all levels. Everything depended on the training given to teachers and the access to training and education available to all individuals, throughout their lives, to enable them to make the most of the opportunities offered by the information society. However, apart from access it was also important to ensure that quality "content" was available. The Member States were urged to devise priority measures for minorities and women and to try to reduce the cost of access to the new technologies and the internet. The committee also wanted the Lisbon target of providing all schools in the EU with internet access by the end of 2001 to be reached and wanted all teachers to have rapid access to the internet and a personal e-mail address by 2002. In addition, every pupil or student should have access to an e-mail address at their school or college. There should also be flat-rate internet access rates for teaching establishments. The Commission was also urged to continue its support for European networks such as "European Schoolnet" and to draw up indicators to monitor the progress of the e-Learning initiative. Lastly, the committee wanted a system to be created for the mutual recognition of national qualifications in information technology.