Basic information

2004/0025(COD) COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure) Decision	Procedure completed
European digital content: quality, access, use and exploitation, eContentplus. 2005-2008 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	Appointed
ITRE Industry, Research and Energy	RÜBIG Paul (PPE-DE)	27/07/2004

Former committee responsible	Former rapporteur	Appointed
ITRE Industry, External Trade, Research, Energy	VAN VELZEN W.G. (PPE-DE)	02/12/2003

Former committee for opinion	Former rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
BUDG Budgets	VIRRANKOSKI Kyösti (ELDR)	09/03/2004
JURI Legal Affairs and Internal Market	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
CULT Culture, Youth, Education, Media and Sport	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space)	2605	2004-09-24
Transport, Telecommunications and Energy	2589	2004-06-10
Agriculture and Fisheries	2643	2005-02-28

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner

Communications Networks, Content and Technology	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
13/02/2004	Legislative proposal published	COM(2004)0096	Summary
25/02/2004	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 1st reading		
06/04/2004	Vote in committee, 1st reading		Summary
06/04/2004	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading	A5-0235/2004	
21/04/2004	Debate in Parliament		
22/04/2004	Decision by Parliament, 1st reading	T5-0364/2004	Summary
30/04/2004	Modified legislative proposal published	COM(2004)0367	Summary
24/09/2004	Council position published	10458/4/2004	Summary
14/10/2004	Committee referral announced in Parliament, 2nd reading		
18/01/2005	Vote in committee, 2nd reading		Summary
19/01/2005	Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading	A6-0002/2005	
26/01/2005	Debate in Parliament		
27/01/2005	Decision by Parliament, 2nd reading	T6-0016/2005	Summary
27/01/2005	Results of vote in Parliament		
28/02/2005	Act approved by Council, 2nd reading		
09/03/2005	Final act signed		
09/03/2005	End of procedure in Parliament		
24/03/2005	Final act published in Official Journal		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2004/0025(COD)
Procedure type	COD - Ordinary legislative procedure (ex-codecision procedure)
Procedure subtype	Legislation
Legislative instrument	Decision
Legal basis	EC Treaty (after Amsterdam) EC 157-p3
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ITRE/6/24226

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A5-0235/2004	06/04/2004	
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T5-0364/2004 OJ C 104 30.04.2004, p. 0746-0981 E	22/04/2004	Summary
Committee recommendation tabled for plenary, 2nd reading		A6-0002/2005	19/01/2005	
Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading		T6-0016/2005 OJ C 253 13.10.2005, p. 0014-0028 E	27/01/2005	Summary

Council of the EU

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	12302/2004	09/09/2004	
Council position	10458/4/2004 OJ C 025 01.02.2005, p. 0019-0028 E	24/09/2004	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Legislative proposal	COM(2004)0096	13/02/2004	Summary
Document attached to the procedure	SEC(2004)0169	13/02/2004	
Modified legislative proposal	COM(2004)0367	30/04/2004	Summary
Commission communication on Council's position	COM(2004)0659	08/10/2004	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2005)698	10/02/2005	
Follow-up document	COM(2011)0548	09/09/2011	Summary

Other institutions and bodies

Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
EESC	Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report	CES0665/2004 OJ C 117 30.04.2004, p. 0049-0051	28/04/2004	

Additional information

Source	Document	Date

European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Final act	
Decision 2005/0456 OJ L 079 24.03.2005, p. 0001-0008	Summary

European digital content: quality, access, use and exploitation, eContentplus. 2005-2008 programme

2004/0025(COD) - 24/09/2004 - Council position

Whilst the Council shares the overall objective of the proposal, in the course of discussion within the Council the text has been partly reworded. The main points of the common position which differ from the Commission proposal and the European Parliament amendments are as follows:

- given the size of the projects envisaged in the proposal, reference is made to SMEs, and to people with special needs;

- a new paragraph specifies the consistency of the programme with other relevant Community policies, programmes and actions;

- the Council favours the management procedure with regard to comitology;

- the total amount proposed by the Commission for the financial framework is reduced to EUR 135 million. In line with other legislation a break clause has been inserted to maintain budget discipline as the programme extends beyond the current financial perspective. The indicative breakdown of expenditure in Annex III has been modified, with more impetus on Action line 1.

All Parliament amendments save one were accepted, although in slightly modified form.

European digital content: quality, access, use and exploitation, eContentplus. 2005-2008 programme

2004/0025(COD) - 22/04/2004 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted the report by W.G van VELZEN (EPP-ED, NL). While agreeing with the proposed objectives, MEPs felt that in some cases the wording was too general. They specified, for example, that access to digital content should be facilitated at Community level "in areas of public interest". The Parliament makes the following amendments: - digital content stakeholders refer to content providers (including organisations that create, collect or own digital content) and content users (including organisations and enterprises that are end-users, that re-use and/or add value to digital content); - in the context of the evaluation, the Commission shall report on the consistency of the amount for 2007-2008 with the financial perspective. If applicable, the Commission shall take the necessary steps within the budgetary procedures for 2007-2008 to ensure the consistency of the annual appropriations with the financial perspective; - the Commission shall forward the results of its quantitative and qualitative evaluations to the European Parliament and the Council together with any appropriate proposals for the amendment of this Decision. The results shall be forwarded before presentation of the draft general budget of the European Union for the year 2007 and 2009 respectively; - the financial framework for the implementation of the Community action under this Decision for the period from 1st January 2005 to 31 December 2008 is hereby set at EUR 163 million, of which EUR 55,6 million is for the period until 31 December 2006; - for the period following 31 December 2006, the amount shall be deemed to be confirmed if it is consistent for this phase with the financial perspective in force for the period commencing in 2007; - the annual appropriations for the period from 2005 to 2008 shall be authorised by the budgetary authority within the limits of the financial perspective. An indicative breakdown of expenditure is given in Annex III.

European digital content: quality, access, use and exploitation, eContentplus. 2005-2008 programme

2004/0025(COD) - 30/04/2004 - Modified legislative proposal

The Commission states that all the changes made by the European Parliament are in line with the Commission's proposal and make useful clarifications for the implementation of the eContentplus programme. The Commission therefore accepts them all. They aim to: - clarify the reference to digital content stakeholders; - ensure the consistency of the annual appropriations with the financial perspective; - forward the results of the quantitative and qualitative evaluations to the European Parliament and the Council together with any appropriate proposals for the amendment of the Decision before presentation of the draft general budget of the European Union for the year 2007 and 2009 respectively.

European digital content: quality, access, use and exploitation, eContentplus. 2005-2008 programme

2004/0025(COD) - 08/10/2004 - Commission communication on Council's position

The Commission notes that the Council has reached an agreement by unanimity. The Council's common position takes up in essence the amendments made by Parliament. It proposes a number of additional changes to the Commission's original proposal, including a change in the budget amount of the Programme. Lastly, the Commission considers that the Council's common position does not substantially modify the objectives and scope of the Commission's proposal.

European digital content: quality, access, use and exploitation, eContentplus. 2005-2008 programme

2004/0025(COD) - 27/01/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, 2nd reading

The European Parliament adopted the report by Paul RÜBIG (EPP-ED, AT), approving the Council's common position under the 2nd reading of the codecision procedure, subject to one amendment increasing the programme's budget. The financial framework for the implementation of the Community actions under this Decision for the period from 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2008 is hereby set at EUR 149 million, of which EUR 55,6 million is for the period until 31 December 2006.

European digital content: quality, access, use and exploitation, eContentplus. 2005-2008 programme

2004/0025(COD) - 09/09/2011 - Follow-up document

This Report concerns the final evaluation of the eContentplus Programme (2005-2008) established by Decision No 456/2005/EC. The Programme ran for a period of 4 years from 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2008 with a budget of EUR 149 million, of which 100% has been fully committed to projects, studies and administration (cost related to the organisation of evaluations of proposals and project reviews).

The objective of the Programme was to make digital content in Europe more accessible, usable and exploitable, facilitating the creation and diffusion of information, in areas of public interest, at Community level.

Findings: the evaluators found that the Programme has contributed to making digital content in Europe more accessible, usable and exploitable, facilitating the creation and diffusion of information, in areas of public interest. The Programme achievements are in line with the objectives of the Programme. It succeeded in creating better conditions for accessing, using, re-using and exploiting digital material. The report notes most projects would not have been realised without financial support from the eContentplus Programme, underlining the usefulness of such financial mechanisms at European level. At project level, results such as the establishment of the European Digital Library Europeana, the common multilingual access point to Europe’s digital cultural heritage, would not have been achieved. The creation of this flagship project, around which some 20 ‘feeder’ projects cluster, providing access to around 17 million cultural items from more than 1500 European cultural institutions (directly or indirectly through aggregators), is a significant achievement.

The report notes that in the area of digital libraries, the eContentplus Programme is the first programme whose main impact has been to make material directly available to individual citizens on a very large scale. Indeed, rather than influencing stakeholders or making technical adjustments and standards which encourage or permit such availability, **europeana.eu** has become the access point for European cultural content. The Programme has also highlighted a number of challenges that have to be addressed:

- increased public funding is needed to finance large-scale digitisation, alongside initiatives with private partners provided that they allow a general accessibility of Europe's common cultural heritage online;
- fragmentation and complexity in the current licensing system also hinders the digitisation of a large part of Europe's recent cultural heritage;
- rights clearance must be improved, and the role and responsibilities of private and public organisations for digitising orphan works as well as material that is in copyright but no longer commercially available should be clarified.

Main recommendations: increasing demand for quality digital content in Europe calls for continued support at European level, in particular in areas of public interest where progress is likely to be slow and where access to content is limited by language and cultural barriers. A number of general points have emerged during the evaluation that could be indicative for future actions:

- funding should be linked to clear and defined policy objectives. Even if funding actions in other areas have positive outcomes and effects, focusing on areas where the EU has clear and defined policy objectives is likely to produce more sustainable outputs with a higher impact. The link between the target area of cultural content/digital libraries and the i2010 digital library initiative is a particularly good example of this;
- the Digital Libraries Initiative should continue to receive economic support from the Commission to ensure the continued development of Europeana and similar services at European level;

- although Public Sector Information (PSI) has enormous economic value, it is still not extensively exploited. The implementation of the PSI Directive (Directive 2003/98/EC)should continue to be supported by activities that maximise the re-use of PSI in Europe and unlock its full economic potential. This is particularly evident in the area of geographic information where the fragmentation of datasets hampers cross-border use and prevents their exploitation for scientific and commercial purposes;
- in order to continue boosting the sharing of spatial information between public sector organisations and citizens, eContentplus follow-on activities should support projects helping to create a more standardised electronic environment for storing and harmonising spatial datasets covering one or more of the topics mentioned in Annex IIII of the INSPIRE Directive (Directive 2007/2/EC);
- both the multilingual and the multicultural dimensions of the Programme have been highly appreciated and the Commission should continue to emphasise such aspects;
- simplifications in the eContentplus grant agreement have been perceived to be very efficient, in particular the introduction of a flat rate for overheads and the payment of the Community contribution as pre-financing in instalments. The publication of a clear mapping of programme objectives and award criteria as well as the two-stage evaluation process have had very positive effects on the submission and selection of high-quality proposals. They should be considered for grant agreements implementing future funding programmes;
- best Practice Networks have proved to have had a significant impact on networking and practical testing by providing the most appropriate solutions and involving all relevant stakeholders. This funding instrument should be considered for funding activities that seek to achieve competitive and innovative solutions;
- in the educational content area, continuous action is needed to support the implementation of efficient context-aware brokerage systems and learning technologies standardisation. Actions carried out should focus on the use of educational content by specific groups (e.g. SMEs) in specific educational contexts while still contributing to global standardisation of learning technologies.

Conclusions: in recognition of the need for further support at European level to increase the availability of European digital content, measures to make digital content in Europe more accessible, usable and exploitable have been continued under the ICT Policy Support Programme (PSP) (one of the three specific programmes of The Competitiveness and Innovation framework Programme) since 2009. The themes included in the ICT PSP 2009 and 2010 work programmes as eContentplus follow-up activities seek to foster projects in support of Commission policy in the following fields: digital libraries; digitisation and online accessibility of cultural content, and digital preservation; access, dissemination and preservation of scientific information in the digital age and re-use of Public Sector Information. These areas have also been recognised among the priorities for action of the Digital Agenda for EuropeThe ICT PSP will continue to be used to support the policy objective of strengthening Europeana and supporting initiatives allowing improved accessibility of Europe's cultural heritage online, and will be used to encourage the digitisation and online availability of cultural material. Funding will be used to encourage public bodies to realise the objective of stimulating content markets by making their information available on transparent, effective, non-discriminatory terms.

European digital content: quality, access, use and exploitation, eContentplus. 2005-2008 programme

2004/0025(COD) - 09/03/2005 - Final act

PURPOSE: establishment of a multiannual Community programme to make digital content in Europe more accessible, usable and exploitable.

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Decision 456/2005/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council.

CONTENT: This Decision establishes a Community programme for the period 2005 to 2008 to make digital content in Europe more accessible, usable and exploitable, facilitating the creation and diffusion of information, in areas of public interest, at Community level. The programme shall be known as the ‘eContentplus’ programme. 'The new programme will concentrate on those parts of the digital content market where there is clear fragmentation in Europe, and where market forces alone so far have been insufficient to drive growth.

The financial framework for the implementation of the Community actions under this Decision for the period from 1 January 2005 to 31 December 2008 is set at EUR 149 million, of which EUR 55,6 million is for the period until 31 December 2006.

In order to attain the overall aim of the Programme, the following lines of action shall be addressed:

(a) facilitating at Community level access to digital content, its use and exploitation (40-50% of the financial allocation);

(b) facilitating improvement of quality and enhancing best practice related to digital content between content providers and users, and across sectors (45-55%);

(c) reinforcing cooperation between digital content stakeholders and awareness (8-12%).

The activities are to be carried out in the target areas of public sector information, spatial data and educational, cultural and scientific content.

The Commission shall report on the implementation of the lines of action by mid-2006.

European digital content: quality, access, use and exploitation, eContentplus. 2005-2008 programme

2004/0025(COD) - 13/02/2004 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to establish a Community programme to make digital content in the Community more accessible, usable and exploitable, facilitating the creation and diffusion of information and knowledge - in areas of public interest - at Community level. PROPOSED ACT : Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council. CONTENT : Media convergence and the global reach of the Internet have turned digital content into a potentially lucrative asset. However, in relation to the uptake of digital content, Europe has barriers. In particular, barriers relating to the multiplicity of languages, cultures and practices of public administration and enterprises affect the establishment of cross border services in Europe based on digital content. In order to address the challenges posed, it is proposed to adopt a financial support programme to make digital content in Europe more accessible. The programme will contribute to the Lisbon strategy and strengthen European competitiveness in the knowledge economy. The programme focuses on the end-user - be it the citizen in society, the student, the researcher, business user wishing to augment their knowledge, or the 'reuser' wishing to enhance and exploit digital content resources for economic return. It should broaden user choice and help stakeholders to reap the benefits that knowledge-enhanced digital content can offer. The programme envisages three operational goals: - Facilitating access to European Digital Content - Improving quality by facilitating best practice related to digital content; - Reinforcing co-operation and awareness between digital content stakeholders. The programme will finance projects designed to improve tools, processes and services related to the production, access, use and distribution of digital content. The programme will facilitate the transfer of knowledge, experiences and good practices; coordination activities; cross-fertilisation between content sectors, content providers and users. To this end, the programme encompasses the use of best practice actions normally conducted in thematic clusters as well as thematic networks bringing together a variety of stakeholders around a given technological and organisational objective. The overriding principle of the programme is to maximise the impact on a group of actors beyond the participants of the programme. A tighter focus in terms of participants as well as objectives should help achieve this. The financial envelope for the implementation of the programme is proposed to be EUR 163 million covering a period of 4 years (2005-2008). Specifically, the activities of the programme will support the emergence of pan-European frameworks (services, information infrastructures, etc.) facilitating discovery of and access to digital content in Europe, the creation of new content-based services and their organizational underpinnings. A series of experiments will showcase how semantically well-defined metadata can improve usability and reusability, searchability and interoperability of digital content in multilingual and multicultural environments. Where digital content involves personal data, the technologies used should be privacy-compliant and, where possible, privacy-enhancing. Target areas will bepublic sector information, spatial data, learning and cultural content. Fostering the organisational frameworks to ease access to digital resources and showcasing the best use of technologies for their exploitation will lower the perceived risk for organisations and thus create a better environment for investment and innovation in digital content. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS : Budget lines and headings : 09 03 02 and 09 01 04 02 Overall figures: Total allocation for action: EUR 163 million Period of application: From January 1st, 2005 to December 31st, 2008 Schedule of commitment appropriations/payment appropriations (financial intervention): total EUR 160 million Technical and administrative assistance and support expenditure: EUR 3 million Overall financial impact of human resources and other administrative expenditure: EUR 7.928 million. 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. Total: EUR 170.928 million Staff to be assigned to management of the action using existing and/or additional resources: 17