



2009 to be designated European Year of Creativity and Innovation

The European Parliament backs a Commission proposal for 2009 to be designated 'European Year of Creativity and Innovation'. However, while the Commission chiefly wishes to emphasise lifelong learning, the European Parliament proposes a broader focus, highlighting a wider range of EU programmes.

Each year the EU chooses a theme for a campaign aimed at raising public awareness of, and drawing national governments' attention to, a specific issue. Rapporteur Katerina **Batzeli** (PES, EL) backs this tradition, calling it a means of "heightening public awareness, disseminating information concerning good practices, stimulating political debate and exchanges, and activating the public." Previous years saw 2006 designated as European Year of Workers' Mobility, 2007 as European Year of Equal Opportunities and 2008 as European Year of Intercultural Dialogue.

For 2009 the Commission suggests highlighting the role that creativity and innovation play in fostering economic and social prosperity through benefits to the individual and society. It argues that more needs to be done on this front across the European Union, particularly in the field of education where the approach should be based on 'lifelong learning.'

The rapporteur "shares the Commission's view regarding the need for Europe to highlight its creative and innovative capacities for both social and economic reasons and to step up Europe's potential to rise to the challenges and opportunities of globalisation." The House suggests only a few alterations to the proposal but, while the Commission highlights the Lifelong Learning Programme, the European Parliament stresses the importance of all EU programmes that promote creativity and innovation.

As for previous European Years, measures will include promotion campaigns, events and initiatives at European, national, regional and local levels. The Commission is not seeking special funding for the year in question. This will be provided under existing Community programmes and administrative budgets.

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