



**COUNCIL OF
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Subject : i2010 - Annual Information Society Report 2007

- Council Conclusions

1. On 2 April 2007, the Commission transmitted to the Council its Communication "i2010 - Annual Information Society Report 2007". i2010 is the Commission's initiative for information society and media policies. It ensures coherence across the Commission's information society and media policies and seeks to reinforce the important contribution of information and communication technologies (ICT) to the performance of our economies and the renewed Lisbon Strategy. i2010 operates in a fast changing environment and therefore requires regular up-dating and fine-tuning. The communication represents the second such up-dating and prepares the ground for a more extensive mid-term review in 2008.

2. On 23 May 2007, the Permanent Representatives Committee examined the draft conclusions. A new drafting proposal was made by the UK which led to a scrutiny reserve for all delegations on the proposed text. After the deadline for lifting these reserves had run out, the Presidency decided to propose to the Council the text as it was originally proposed by the Working Party.

A parliamentary scrutiny reserve from DK and some linguistic reserves still remain on the text.

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS**on****i2010 - Annual Information Society Report 2007****THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,**

1. WELCOMES

- the Commission communication of 30 March 2007 on the "i2010 – Annual Information Society Report 2007".

2. RECALLS

- the Council Conclusions of 1 December 2005 on „i2010 – A European Information Society for Growth and Employment“, including the eAccessibility conclusions;
- the Council Conclusions of June 2006 on „eGovernment services for all Europeans and the Manchester Ministerial Declaration of 24 November 2005;
- the Riga Ministerial Declaration of 11 June 2006 on eInclusion;
- the Conclusions of the European Council of December 2006, inviting the 2008 European Spring Council to review the challenges of the next generation networks (NGNs) within the framework of the Lisbon strategy;

3. NOTES

- the recommendations of the Task Force on ICT sector Competitiveness and ICT Uptake, especially with regard to obstacles to the developments of the information society.

4. UNDERLINES

- the need to further strengthen the link between the ICT policies and the achievement of the Lisbon goals;
- in particular, that creating an integrated secure information society contributes significantly to supporting growth, productivity and employment and, thus, represents an important instrument for reaching the objectives of the Lisbon strategy as shown by the positive developments in the EU's information society;
- the importance of integrating ICT deployment with business and public administration process re-engineering, necessary for the Lisbon contributions to be fully realised and of a targeted approach of stimulating the take-up of ICT by SMEs;
- the wide economic and social benefits which can be achieved through an inclusive information society;
- the need for policy makers to respond to the rapidly changing business models and technology developments resulting from convergence;
- the need for broadly-based cooperation by the respective stakeholders, i.e. civil society and citizens on the one hand as well as of the business sector and national administrations on the other, for the purpose of creating an integrated information society and ensuring that all EU citizens can benefit from the continued development of the information society;
- the need for further developing the i2010 Agenda in cooperation with the Commission, the Member States and the relevant stakeholders, to ensure that the focus remains on the areas which evidence confirms will deliver the greatest contribution to the European economy;
- the fact that the i2010-2007 Annual Report has identified new trends that might require further analysis;

- the importance of the Seventh Framework Programme for Research (FP7) and of the ICT policy support programme in the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) for stimulation innovation and competitiveness in the European Union;
- the opportunity for industry to respond to business opportunities resulting from an inclusive approach when developing and manufacturing products and services in the ICT sector.

5. INVITES THE COMMISSION TO

- develop policies regarding future trends identified in the i2010 Annual Report for the forthcoming mid-term review in 2008, in particular:
 - **Next generation of networks and the Internet (NGNs):** Address obstacles hindering market-led investment decisions with respect to emerging technological trends such as the migration towards very high-speed networks, ubiquitous wireless technologies, web 2.0, the Internet of Things and web-based services, all of which are expected to change society and the working environment, and offering new solutions for eBusiness, industrial applications and the ubiquitous Information Society;
 - **The user role** taking into account the forthcoming 2008 eInclusion initiative, consumer issues, the explosion of user generated content, the challenges to enable an environment that strengthens consumer confidence and stimulates innovation and competitiveness of the European economy, the possible policy implications of these developments within the i2010-Initiative and the need for measures to further increase the security of information and communication technologies as well as for improving the trust of users in applications and services interoperability;

- **The internal market:** The i2010's key objective is to create a single information space. While it is important to tackle barriers that hinder the provision of pan-European services and prevent consumers and enterprises from benefiting from the full potential of the internal market, the reflection should go beyond these obstacles and review the challenges for the internal market raised by ICT and boost the efficiency of services for the European economy.
- pursue further the objectives identified in the Riga Ministerial Declaration, dated 11 June 2006, for developing an inclusive information society;
- promote the dialogue between the stakeholders and actors in the field of eInclusion, together with the EU Member States, in appropriate forums for users and industry to meet with policy-makers.

6. INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION TO

- continue to ensure that the contribution of ICT to the Lisbon agenda is adequately reflected in the National Reform Programmes and on the EU agenda;
- carefully consider the impact of new legislation and policy measures on the development of the information society, especially with regard to consumers;
- support actions that further promote the eGovernment Action plan¹;
- encourage standardization and harmonization of technical regulations, where appropriate, and to continue to support the activities of the European and international standardization authorities;

¹ Doc. 8688/06 (COM(2006)173 final)

- create the appropriate environment which facilitates and encourages the rapid development of advanced services which could generate a positive impact on growth and employment; RFID, Mobile TV and m-commerce could be motors for such an impact;
- create the appropriate conditions for rolling-out of the infrastructures for very high speed access (fixed and mobile), which are strategic for European competitiveness;
- continue to promote a rich and diverse digital content market, as well as evolutions of the internet that fully take into account the principle of end-to-end communications, increased use of broadband and the market-led development of Next Generation Networks (NGNs);
- further support a more efficient and flexible use of spectrum through the coordination of and, where necessary, harmonisation of measures leading to spectrum availability and the use of the digital dividend, according to Community competence and without prejudice to general interest objectives and geographical and topographical realities, in order to foster innovation, competitiveness, interoperability and convergence as well as a dynamic single market for innovative wireless equipment and services;
- encourage that public websites are designed taking into account the international Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI) Guidelines to enable these sites also to be used by people with disabilities;
- support further initiatives in order to make the ICTs more easily accessible for all, especially for people with disabilities and elderly people and adults with a lower level of education, as well as to improve the delivery of services in rural areas;
- continue to exchange information with stakeholders on long-term developments of eInclusion and to develop a policy approach to the above identified issues, the results to be reported during the first half of 2008 in view of the Spring 2008 European Council.

7. CALLS ON ALL STAKEHOLDERS

- to engage in implementation of all actions necessary at European and national levels, with a view to contributing to a successful i2010 mid-term evaluation;
 - to develop and promote user-friendly products and services for improved accessibility and product development all the while taking account of the principle of „Design for All (DFA)“;
 - to work together in developing eInclusion - initiatives with the Commission, the Member States and the industry to improve the availability of accessible products and services and their compatibility with assistive technologies.
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