

# European information society for growth and employment, i2010

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This Communication from the Commission deals with Europe's Digital Competitiveness Report - "Main achievements of the i2010 strategy 2005-2009".

In 2005, the Commission presented the i2010 strategy to boost Europe's lead in ICT and to unlock the benefits of the information society for European growth and jobs.

This strategy outlined concrete policy measures to: (i) **boost the single market for businesses and users** by eliminating regulatory obstacles and enhancing regulatory consistency in the telecoms sector and for audiovisual media services; (ii) **stimulate ICT research and innovation** in Europe by pooling public and private research funding and focusing it on areas where Europe is or can become a global leader; (iii) **ensure that all citizens benefit from Europe's lead in ICT**, in particular through first-class online public services accessible to all.

Over the past four years, ICT policies have confirmed their role as a **major driver of Europe's economic and social modernisation** and have made Europe more resilient in times of crisis. Today, they are firmly anchored in European core policies for growth and jobs. All EU Member States have ICT policies and consider them a key contributor to national growth and jobs under the renewed Lisbon agenda. i2010 has also influenced other policy areas, such as the Single Market and the Consumer Agenda. ICT policies today are implemented through various instruments, such as the Structural Funds or the Rural Development Funds.

ICT, and in particular the broadband internet, is a crucial component of the [European economic recovery plan](#). ICT accounts for half of the rise in EU productivity and available high-speed broadband is key to new jobs, new skills, new markets and cutting costs. It is essential to businesses, public services and to making the modern economy work. This has been recognised in the Commission's proposals to speed up economic recovery by smart investments in broadband networks in rural areas, endorsed by the European Council, up to **EUR 1.02 billion**.

The main results are as follows:

- the number of regular internet users has increased from 43% in 2005 to 56% in 2008; most of them use the internet almost daily and with high-speed internet access. Regular internet use is also becoming more inclusive, with the numbers of users in disadvantaged groups (the inactive, the less educated and those aged 55-64) rising the fastest;
- Europe has become the world leader in broadband internet. With 114 million subscribers, it is the largest world market and penetration rates are rising swiftly. Half of all European households and more than 80% of European businesses have a fixed broadband connection, three quarters of them with average download speeds above 2 Mbps. Broadband internet is available to 93% of the EU25 population, up from 87% in 2005;
- 80% of regular internet users engage in increasingly interactive activities, e.g. communicating, using online financial services, sharing and creating new content and participating in innovative processes;

- the market for mobile phones has exceeded 100% penetration — increasing from 84% of the EU population in 2004 to 119% in 2009. This makes Europe the world leader in mobile penetration, as the rates in the US and Japan are around 80%. Consumers spend more time talking and texting at prices at least 34.5% less than in 2004, including a 70% drop in roaming charges since 2005;
- Europe has made fast progress in the supply and use of the 20 benchmarked online public services. The supply of fully available services to citizens has increased to 50% in 2007 (27% in 2004) and for businesses to 70% (58% in 2004). One third of European citizens and almost 70% of businesses in the EU use eGovernment services;
- Europe is also the home of breakthrough research, such as Giant Magneto-Resistance technology, which revolutionised the hard disk business and won the 2007 Nobel prize in physics, and ADSL technology, the basis for today's broadband internet success;
- many Member States now have integrated national ICT strategies with objectives similar to those of the i2010 initiative.

These are some of the key success stories of the past four years.

**Conclusions and perspectives:** the achievements of i2010 and the ways it has been implemented in the Member States provide a snapshot of the dynamism and range of schemes that innovative policies can produce; i2010 has laid the building blocks for a modern ICT-enabled society. **Broadband is today firmly on the political agenda.**

Nevertheless, Europe faces important decisions about how to build a seamlessly connected **digital economy poised for recovery**. In addition, over the coming years the internet is expected to become an essential service, crucial for us to participate fully in society.

To seize these opportunities, the Commission calls on the Member States and on stakeholders to actively cooperate in the months ahead until early 2010 to **draft a new digital agenda** so that Europe can emerge from the current crisis with a stronger, more competitive and more open digital economy, driving European growth and innovation.