Information society, eEurope: Commission initiative for European Council in Lisbon, 23-24 March 2000

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The European Commission has presented an Action Plan - eEurope 2005 : an information society for all - in view of its approbation by the Seville European Council on 21 and 22 June 2002. The objective of this Action Plan is to provide a favourable environment for private investment and for the creation of new jobs, to boost productivity, to modernise public services, and to give everyone the opportunity to participate in the global information society. eEurope 2005 therefore aims to stimulate secure services, applications and content based on a widely available broadband infrastructure. This action plan will succeed the eEurope 2002 action plan endorsed by the Feira European Council in June 2000. eEurope is part of the Lisbon strategy to make the European Union the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy with improved employment and social cohesion by 2010. By 2005, Europe should have: - modern online public services : e-government; e-learning services; e-health services; - a dynamic e-business environment and, as an enabler for these - widespread availability of broadband access at competitive prices; - a secure information infrastructure. The action plan comprises four separate but interlinked tools: 1) policy measures to review and adapt legislation at national and European level; to ensure legislation does not unnecessarily hamper new services; to strengthen competition and interoperability; to improve access to a variety of networks; and, to demonstrate political leadership. eEurope 2005 identifies those areas where public policy can provide an added value and therefore focuses on a limited set of actions in priority areas. Some key targets are: - Connecting public administrations, schools, health care to broadband; - Interactive public services, accessible for all, and offered on multiple platforms; - Provide online health services; - Removal of obstacles to the deployment of broadband networks; - Review of legislation affecting e-business; - Creation of a Cyber Security Task Force. 2) eEurope will facilitate the exchange of experience, of good practices and demonstration projects, but also of sharing the lessons from failures. Projects will be launched to accelerate the roll-out of leading edge applications and infrastructure. 3) policy measures will be monitored and better focussed by benchmarking of the progress made in achieving the objectives and of the policies in support of the objectives. 4) an overall co-ordination of existing policies will bring out synergies between proposed actions. A steering group will provide a better overview of policy developments and ensure a good information exchange between national and European policy makers and the private sector. This steering group would also make an early participation of candidate countries possible. This action plan is a proposal to Member States to take some far-reaching commitments. It is an invitation to the private sector to work with the Commission and Member States to realise the eEurope objectives. It sets out the initiatives theCommission will or is willing to take. Overall the action plan sets the scene for a co-ordinated European policy approach on information society issues. The eEurope action plan should be confirmed as a key element in the Lisbon strategy.