

# The information society

2004/2204(INI) - 24/05/2005

The committee adopted the own-initiative report drawn up by Catherine TRAUTMANN(PES, FR) ahead of the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) to be held in Tunis in November 2005. It broadly endorsed the proposals made by the Commission for the second phase of the WSIS, particularly as regards the decisive role of an investment-friendly regulatory framework, ICT applications in priority areas including on-line government, the importance of research and innovation and the contribution of ICTs to development. The Commission was urged to develop a strategy that complies with the WSIS global action plan to be decided at the Tunis Conference.

MEPs emphasised that the development of ICTs might widen the digital divide by favouring those who have access to and know how to use ICTs. This risk should therefore be taken into account in all the actions recommended, which should be tailored to the regional, national or local circumstances. Furthermore, equal importance should be accorded to the economic and the cultural effects of ICT development, so that it benefits employment, enterprises and social cohesion. To guarantee 'e-Inclusion', consideration should be given to "the possibility of the most essential basic services being free of charge on the agreement of all partners".

The report recommended that the EU and the Member States should fast-track the setting-up of ICT research networks, view the WSIS as a spur for cooperation in traditional areas of geographical or historical proximity (the Mediterranean, the ACP states, etc.) and for new cooperation with developing countries, and take into account, as a priority, the infrastructure and training requirements of the least-developed countries (LDCs).

In conclusion, MEPs hoped that the Tunis Summit would:

- facilitate progress towards a common definition of Internet governance;
- deal collectively with subjects of general interest connected with management of the internet (domain names, address allocation);
- strengthen international cooperation in the field of security and Internet abuse (including spamming) and in combating cyber-crime (including child pornography) and attempts to restrict pluralism, freedom of expression and respect for human rights; and
- clarify responsibilities, including public responsibilities, in particular to ensure the neutrality and interoperability of digital technologies and platforms.