

European information society for growth and employment, i2010

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report drawn up by Reino PAASILINNA (PES, FI) in response to the Commission strategy paper on a European Information Society for growth and employment (i2010). It underlined the importance of ICT (Information and Communications Technology) for the Lisbon Strategy and said that, "unless the digital divide is overcome, enabling all citizens to gain access to, use and take part in the production of knowledge, there will be no knowledge-based society, but rather a cultural and industrial decline in the EU as a whole". MEPs called on the Commission to draw up a programme and a favourable legal framework to make citizens active participants in a knowledge-based society, thereby achieving the Lisbon objectives.

The report looked at the three policy objectives outlined by the Commission and stressed that the i2010 programme represented "a decisive phase" in the emergence of the information society. It made a large number of recommendations:

- technology should be made more accessible for citizens and should also meet "the moral demands of society";
- the Commission should guarantee and promote media pluralism by interpreting and implementing the provisions which concern the electronic media infrastructure;
- as Parliament had long demanded, the Commission should draw up a Green Paper on concentration of media ownership and respect for the principles of freedom of information and pluralism;
- a regulatory framework should be established for the internet, given that it is "the fundamental vehicle for an economy based on information";
- Member States should support the universal provision of broadband and wireless technology;
- users should be able to change their service provider without having to change their e-mail address;
- the Commission should specify "clear actions" to provide protection from harmful content;
- when reviewing ICT legislation, the Commission should lay down quality criteria such as the protection of childhood and freedom of choice of consumers;
- the "Television without Frontiers" Directive should be adapted to changes in a converging media world;
- the Commission should promote concrete activities for facilitating and supporting the creation and distribution of European content, and pan-European broadcasting systems such as EuroNews should be supported;
- public services and public broadcasting services, which contribute to "social cohesion, the democratic discourse and pluralism in Europe", must be able to take part in technological and social development and continue to perform their social function;

- Member States should take additional measures to ensure access to e-government services irrespective of place, time or wealth;
- the Commission should draw up without delay a proposal for a charter of citizens' fundamental rights for the digital age;
- a Charter of eRights should progressively be adopted by public administrations in Europe as a shared set of principles and guidelines defining the framework within which all citizens can enjoy those rights;
- the Commission should establish a dialogue with the main players on the media market, with a view to drafting a Gender Equality Code for the media.