

European information society for growth and employment, i2010

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The Council held a public policy debate on the EU's i2010 strategy, on the basis of questions proposed by the Presidency, and adopted the following conclusions:

The Council invites the Commission to :

- ensure full implementation of the 2002 Regulatory Framework including the completion of market reviews by National Regulatory Authorities;
- review the impact of digital convergence on the creation, circulation and distribution of European content, and if appropriate, bring forward proposals to promote a rich and diverse digital content market, increased use of broadband and the development of Next Generation Networks (NGNs);
- encourage investment in ICT Research and Development (R&D) and wider ICT take-up in the public and private sector, notably through existing and future EU R&D Framework and Competitiveness and Innovation Programmes, including by promoting Small and Medium Enterprises' (SME) participation and ensuring that the results of these programmes are widely disseminated;
- launch early in 2006, an effective strategy for developing a secure and safe European Information Space, with the support of the European Network and Information Security Agency, based on reliable networks, which fosters greater trust and confidence, addresses identification and authentication issues, and recognizes the important roles to be played by suppliers, business users, citizens and governments, and which includes a timetable for implementation;
- encourage the efficient use of ICTs in public services, such as eGovernment and eHealth, through the exchange of experience and the development of common approaches on key issues such as interoperability and effective use of open standards;
- take account, in its Communication on eGovernment, of the Ministerial Declaration on eGovernment;
- prepare a European initiative on e-Inclusion in 2008 addressing issues relating to eAccessibility, equal opportunities, digital literacy and regional divides;
- promote education and training policies so that Europe has the skills it needs to research, innovate and use ICT;
- promote interoperability and open standards in the European Information Space by ensuring that European standardisation policy addresses the needs of the ICT sector.

Member States are invited to :

- identify information society priorities within their National Reform Programmes, so that the potential contribution of ICT to the Lisbon agenda and the action needed to implement it is fully reflected in national policies;

- ensure rapid and complete implementation of the EU electronic communications regulatory framework, including completion of the market reviews;
- ensure a more efficient and flexible use of spectrum through the coordination of policy approaches, where appropriate, according to Community competence and without prejudice to general interest objectives, in order to foster innovation, competitiveness, interoperability and convergence as well as a dynamic single market for innovative wireless equipment and services;
- promote the roll-out of advanced seamless networks through the rapid implementation of national strategies, aimed at increasing broadband coverage and multiplatform access, and stimulating take-up, making use, where appropriate, of EU structural funds, in line with the Commission Guidelines;
- encourage effective use of ICTs by public services and businesses (especially SMEs), by promoting the necessary skills needed for their deployment, promoting interoperability and open standards, and effective on-line public services through the introduction of organisational change;
- encourage the effective use of ICTs to build a fully inclusive information society by 2010, bridging existing and avoiding the emergence of new digital divides, through national policy instruments;
- strengthen support of research and innovation by encouraging private investments and cooperation between research and innovation programmes.

The Council invites all stakeholders to :

- continue to participate fully in an open and constructive dialogue with Member States and the Commission, including at high-level events, in order to identify the actions that need to be taken to achieve a globally competitive, innovative and inclusive information society;
- identify new business models, innovative technological solutions and effective self-regulation, which will promote competition, strengthen consumer trust and confidence in ICT products and services, and foster a safer, global internet environment;
- intensify the integration of ICT into business processes, through innovative and interoperable ICT applications, standardisation, organisational change and better skills, in order to realise the full benefits of ICT.