

European information society for growth and employment, i2010

2005/2167(INI) - 14/03/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Reino **PAASILINNA** (PES, FI) on a European information society for growth and employment. (Please see the document dated 21/02/2006.) Parliament stated that the EU cannot achieve the Lisbon targets unless the Member States take decisive action to implement fully the i2010 strategy. The EU lags behind in research in information and communication technologies (ICT), investing only EUR 80 per head as compared to EUR 350 in Japan and EUR 400 in the US. The EU must therefore increase investment in research and innovation. Parliament considered 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.

Parliament urged the Commission to adopt an innovative line in its reform of legislation on ICT, which must be regarded as a considerably broader concept than is the case in the Commission's communication. It must include the rights of consumers and users. Parliament went on to make some remarks and recommendations:

- all European legislation relating to communications and information must be founded on technological neutrality, thus guaranteeing that new inventions and actors can access the market as easily as possible;
- Member States should invest more heavily in the exploitation of ICT in public sector services, such as health, education, and government, in which ICT can make it easier to respond to future social service needs;
- Parliament was concerned that the Commission continued to formulate its policy on job-creation on the basis of little or no reliable statistical evidence. While headline growth continues in ICT, there has not always been similar growth in employment. Employment rates in the EU are currently seven points below Lisbon targets. The Commission must carry out in-depth statistical analyses of the effects of technological change on the ICT employment market in the EU.

Objective 1: A single European information space:Parliament made the following remarks:

- the i2010 programme represents a decisive phase in the emergence of the information society which should enable everyone to be a participant, through access to technology and knowledge, a user, through interactivity and the new forms of social interaction offered by networks, and a critical citizen with freedom of choice. The Commission and Member States must help ensure that technology is more accessible to citizens and meets the moral demands of society;
- legislation should support competition so as to reflect the horizontal nature of ICT and should seek to avoid the emergence and preservation of vertical structures which are harmful to competition and innovation;
- the Commission is required to guarantee media pluralism by interpreting and implementing the provisions which concern the electronic media infrastructure. Parliament drew attention to its repeated request to the Commission to draw up a green paper on concentration of media ownership and respect for the principles of freedom of information and pluralism. It regretted that this point is not covered in the i2010 work plan, and called on the Commission to establish a regulatory framework for the internet;

- an efficient information society calls for the universal provision of broadband and wireless technology, which requires further support at Member State level. It should also be possible for users to change their service provider without having to change their e-mail address;
- Parliament called for measures to be taken to protect producer's rights and to combat illegal and pirated content. It warned of the increasing attempts in the USA to use patent and intellectual property legislation as a protectionist tool of trade policy;
- the Commission must specify actions to provide protection from harmful content, and to promote the role of the European Network and Information Security Agency;
- the 'Television without Frontiers' Directive must be adapted to changes in a converging media world and this must be duly taken into account as far as its scope is concerned;
- the Commission must promote concrete activities for facilitating the creation and distribution of European content. The production of content which respects cultural and linguistic diversity presents an opportunity to encourage new skills and new jobs, particularly in the design and creation sectors;
- the management of radio spectrum should seek to make market access as easy as possible for new inventions and actors in the sector while facilitating the development of Community media;
- the Commission is asked to deliver, by September 2006, a complete and analytical overview of the EU's strengths and weaknesses in all ICT-related sectors;

Objective 2: Innovation and investment in Research:Parliament made the following remarks:

- Parliament urges the speedy adoption of the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development and of the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme for 2007-2013, both of which must provide adequate financial resources to support ICT as a driver for growth;
- the Commission and the Member States must take concrete actions to exploit the opportunities created by ICT, in order to hinder the drift of jobs to low-pay countries. It is vital to increase the level of investment to achieve the Barcelona 3% GDP target and to keep it permanently geared to global competition levels;
- measures must be taken as a matter of urgency at EU level to remove obstacles to the development of the Next Generation Networks;
- Parliament welcomes the Commission's proposals to establish a common consolidated corporate tax base.

Objective 3: A single European information society:

- Parliament noted that public broadcasting will continue to have a major role to play in the ubiquitous information society as a protector of publicly accessible high-quality and independent information, and it stressed the importance of guaranteeing public broadcasting access to the platforms of the future;
- emphasis must be given to the issues of interoperability and best practices in public-sector electronic services for citizens and undertakings in matters of taxation, health, insurance cover and pensions etc.,
- over half of the EU population does not benefit in full from ICT. Parliament insisted that ICT also implies investment in human capital through higher budgets for education and culture;

- because of the ageing of the European population, there is a need to invest in product planning, particularly in the Design for All principle;
- the Commission must draw up a proposal for a charter of citizens fundamental rights for the digital age;
- a Charter of eRights should 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;
- media education should serve to provide citizens with the technical wherewithal to bring a critical interpretation to bear on the ever-expanding volume of information and communication;
- Finally, Parliament felt that a focus on the gender dimension of ICT is essential, to prevent the digital revolution from having an adverse impact on gender equality or the perpetuation of existing inequalities and discrimination.