Basic information

2000/2034(COS) COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)	Procedure completed
Information society, eEurope: Commission initiative for European Council in Lisbon, 23-24 March 2000 **Subject** 3.30.25 International information networks and society, internet	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
ITRE Industry, External Trade, Research, Energy	READ Imelda Mary (PSE)	27/01/2000

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	CERCAS Alejandro (PSE)	15/02/2000
ENVI Environment, Public Health, Consumer Policy	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
RETT Regional Policy, Transport and Tourism	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
CULT Culture, Youth, Education, Media and Sport	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	

Council of the European Union

Council configuration	Meetings	Date
Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs	2373	2001-10-08
Competitiveness (Internal Market, Industry, Research and Space)	2248	2000-03-16
Research	2272	2000-06-15

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Communications Networks, Content and Technology	

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
08/12/1999	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(1999)0687	Summary
14/02/2000	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
13/03/2000	Vote in committee		
13/03/2000	Committee report tabled for plenary	A5-0067/2000	
16/03/2000	Decision by Parliament	T5-0122/2000	Summary
16/03/2000	Debate in Council		
16/03/2000	Debate in Parliament		
16/03/2000	End of procedure in Parliament		
15/06/2000	Debate in Council		Summary
29/12/2000	Final act published in Official Journal		
08/10/2001	Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2000/2034(COS)
Procedure type	COS - Procedure on a strategy paper (historic)
Procedure subtype	Commission strategy paper
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 148
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	ITRE/5/12324

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A5-0067/2000 OJ C 377 29.12.2000, p. 0015	13/03/2000	
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T5-0122/2000 OJ C 377 29.12.2000, p. 0184-0380	16/03/2000	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(1999)0687	08/12/1999	Summary
Follow-up document	SEC(2000)2139	29/11/2000	
	COM(2002)0062		

Follow-up document		05/02/2002	Summary
Non-legislative basic document	COM(2002)0263	28/05/2002	Summary

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

2000/2034(COS) - 08/12/1999 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE : A Commission Initiative on 'Europe · An Information Society' for the Special European Council of Lisbon on 23 and 24 March 2000.
CONTENT : The changes wrought by the Information Society are the most significant since the Industrial Revolution, and will have far-reaching effects on all aspects of people's lives. Managing the transformation represents the central social and economic challenge of the Union. Experience from the United States shows that new technologies drive growth and create jobs, yet Europe is not exploiting this potential, since its progress into the digital age is slow. This initiative aims to accelerate the process. Europe has a leading role in mobile communications and digital TV, yet the uptake on the Internet has been relatively slow. Consumers need to acquire skills that will enable them to use the Internet successfully. Europe must overcome the handicaps that are impeding the rapid uptake of digital technologies. These handicaps include the lack of a sufficiently entrepreneurial, service-orientated culture, and an insufficiently pro-active public secor. The initiative builds on the current policy framework, concentrating on ten priority actions, with specific targets and deadlines: - European youth into the digital age. Digital literacy must be a basic competence for all young Europeans. The main targets are that all schools should have access to multimedia resources by 2001. By 2002, all teachers should be skilled in the use of these resources. - Cheaper Internet access. Since the liberalisation of the market for telecommunications infrastructures and services on 1 January 1998, there are signs of falling prices and increased consumer choices. Much remains to be done. Whilst legislative changes based on the 1999 Communications Review will be forthcoming, the Council and Parliament are invited to accelerate the process. Member States are asked to meet certain targets, the main one being that by the end of 2000, incumbents should offer unbundled local loops under non-discriminatory terms and conditions in order to allow all operators to provide innovative services. - Accelerating e-commerce. This trading activity is already worth 17 billion Euro in the Union and is expected to reach 340 billion by 2003. SMEs must take advantage of e-commerce, so that they can benefit from the whole European market. This needs a reliable Internal Market legal framework. Among the targets posited for the end of 2000, is the need to ensure that remaining e-commerce directives are in place. - Fast Internet for researchers and students. The possibilities of interactive networking can be exploited to develop a whole new approach to learning, but online collaboration is not established practice in Europe, where the levels of connectedness vary greatly. The main target is that by the end of 2001, at least one university and one scientific research faculty per country should have a campus network capable of supporting multimedia communications. - Smart cards for secure electronic access. Huge markets willopen up if Europe can lead the development in smart cards, whether individual, multifunctional or embedded in different devices. By the end of 2000, there should exist an inter-sector agreement on common specifications for a generalised smart card infrastructure. - Risk capital for high-tech SMEs. The availability of finance at an early stage is vital if an idea is to commercially successful and create jobs and wealth. Europe lags behind the United States since there remain too many barriers discouraging risk taking. Targets are geared towards the removal of these barriers and innovative means of raising capital - E-Participation for the disabled. The market potential for products and services for disabled people has not been exploited. One of the proposed targets is the development of a European curriculum module in Design-for-All. - Healthcare online. The challenges are to improve quality and accessibility whilst constraining overall costs. There needs to be widespread deployment of fully integrated and interoperable systems. Targets include the setting up of pan European medical on-line libraries, and the opportunity of all citizens for access to a health smart card. - Intelligent transport. Digital technologies encourage safer transport and enhance the quality of public transport in large cities. The targets set out suggest specific uses for these technologies. - Government online. The aim is to make public information more easily accessible by extending and simplifying Internet access. Government services will be closer to citizens and it will create jobs in value·added service providers. One of the targets specifies that Member States and the Commission should ensure that citizens have a two-way electronic access to basic interactions, such as tax forms and funding applications.

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

2000/2034(COS) - 15/06/2000

The Council had an open debate on the information and knowledge society. In order to structure the debate, the Presidency had prepared a questionnaire for the Ministers to discuss which focused on : - the targets set by the Commission in its eEurope communication in the field of RTD, and in particular on the role of information and communication technologies for the realisation of the European Research Area, the priorities for action in the short to medium-term in order to achieve the objectives set out in the two Commission communications, the interrelation between national and Community efforts in this area - the ways in which the eEurope and European Research Area initiatives could best be exploited to ensure effective networking of European researchers; - the creation, by the end of 2001, of a high-speed transeuropean network linking research institutions, universities, libraries, scientific centres and, progressively, schools; - to what extent electronic networks can be used to achieve the goals of making science more attractive to young people, bridging the "skills gap" and creating an information and knowledge society for all, thus preventing exclusion; the Commission's proposed eEurope action plan aimed at ensuring - the achievement of the targets set by the Lisbon Summit by defining the actions and measures to be taken. The President summed up the debate by noting that: - all delegations agreed that the relationship between the European science and technology policy and the development of the knowledge and information society was of vital importance and a closer link between the two would have to be established; - there was a clear need to avoid possible social and economic exclusion resulting from the unequal access by European citizens to electronic information systems.

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

2000/2034(COS) - 05/02/2002 - Follow-up document

The European Commission has adopted the 2002 "eEurope Benchmarking Report", a communication providing a detailed snapshot of the development of the European Information Society since the Lisbon Summit in March 2000. The eEurope Benchmarking exercise analyses data from across Europe on key indicators, ranging from the price of an internet connection to the number of connected schools. The findings are that the eEurope Action Plan has helped increase the number of connected households, schools and business, but that the rate of growth is slowing. Broadband uptake, moreover, is still sluggish, generally expensive and limited to two platforms. The growth of e-commerce is also slowing, while the number of security problems grows. The 2000 Lisbon Summit, which called for the EU to become the most dynamic, knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010, led to the eEurope Action Plan 2002. Benchmarking is a key component of the Action Plan, as it highlights best practices from across the continent and points the way forward for European policy. The eEurope Benchmarking Report 2002 is therefore a key input into the Barcelona European Council in March, where progress towards the Lisbon target will be assessed and new priorities will be identified. The take-up of the internet in European households has increased rapidly (38% in December 2001). Efforts to increase internet use in countries well below the EU average are therefore needed, as is the development of alternative access platforms. Growth in both consumer and corporate e-commerce has been slower than expected. Only 4% of users classify themselves as frequent online purchasers, although the report does show an unexpected surge of peer-to-peer e-commerce. Similarly, only around 20% of European companies buy and sell online, with larger companies dominating, which means that small European companies are not yet taking advantage of e-commerce within the Single Market. Significant progress has recently been made in boosting Europe's research networks with the GEANT Network. Created by the Commission and 27 national research and education networks, GEANT reached a maximum speed of 10 Gigabit/s last December, making it the fastest research network in the world, offering the widest geographic coverage - 32 countries, including all Candidate countries. Overall, the report states that while the eEurope Action Plan 2002 was a successful short-term tool to get Europe online quickly, just being connected is not enough to achieve the Lisbon target. A new focus on effective usage of the Internet is required to bring the benefits of the Information Society to European society. Among other recommendations, the report also calls for: - Concerted action to close the 'internet penetration gap' and the 'digital divides' which threaten - Europe's social cohesion in the new century; - An urgent review of the obstacles to e-commerce; - The integration of the Internet into schooling, not just schools; - The creation of the cyber security task force to tackle security issues and internet crime; - More eGovernment; - Full integration of Candidate Countries into the eEurope process.

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

2000/2034(COS) - 16/03/2000 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted its resolution on eEurope drafted by Ms. Imelda READ (PES, UK). The European Parliament welcomes the Commission's eEurope initiative which contains objectives and a timetable for optimal development of the Information Society in Europe and expects the Commission to draw up detailed plans for achieving these objectives and to establish clear priorities while defining the tasks of the EU and of the individual Member States. However, it regrets that the Commission's communication does not define detailed measures to be taken on both the EU and national level in order to reach these objectives, as well as the fact that important aspects such as sustainability, social cohesion and employment are given no special focus. It therefore hopes that the action plans proposed by the Commission identify and define the measures that should be taken, on the one hand, at regional or national level and, on the other hand, at EU level, taking into account the rapid development in the sector itself. The Parliament stresses that developing the European Information Society can only be supporteed effectively if Europe has a sound knowledge and innovation structure, a broad and well-developed body of users and advanced information and communications technology. It also urges the Commission to analyse the risks and opportunities that the Information society development could create on the job market, therefore to come up with plans for small business expansion and stimulation of innovation and to take initiatives to make sure that job creation in all sectors is fostered by the use of information technologies. Parliament calls on the Council to express a political commitment to eliminating the gap between the US and the EU as regards the Information society and e-commerce and asks the Commission to foress measures to reduce this gap. It also calls on the Commission and the Member States not to undermine flexibility and stifle the growth of e-business by excessive regulation. The European Parliament considers that the development of secure identification systems, systems to preserve the confidentiality of messages and methods to prevent changes in them are paramount to develop a digitalised, competitive and mobile eEurope, and it takes note of the competitive advantage that Europe has as to smart cards and other secure identification systems. According to the Parliament, more attention must be paid to questions relating to protecting the privacy of citizens. Parliament calls for a new Employment Guideline to be drawn up or for each of the current Guidelines to be appropriately adapted for 2001 so that a global e-Europe strategy of action can be taken fully into account at an early stage; it therefore asks the Commission to include a point 11 'Strengthening employment and social cohesion in the information society' in its e-Europe initiative, focusing on short term measures to face the risks of job losses in Europe related to the IT sectors. Parliament points to the importance of ensuring that the needs of older people and disabled people, as well as equality concerns are taken into account in any actions undertaken. Parliament calls for new forms of work arising from the information society to be accompanied by measures to guarantee workers' rights to social security and proper pensions and to enable them to perform such work under conditions providing a high standard of living and employment and the requisite security. The Commission is called upon to develop plans to exploit the benefits of a uniform VAT system for the growth of e-commerce, including consideration of sales taxation at source. It is also called upon to extend the objectives of eEurope to other Community policies and, notably through regional policy, to give special emphasis to measures to support intangible investment and access for SMEs and very small enterprises to new communications and information technologies. The Parliament expressly supports the Commission in its call at WTO level for the establishment of a competition policy with an international dimension. This is particularly important for enterprises operating in the information and communications technology sector because their activities are genuinely geared towards the international market. Parliament calls on the Council and the Commission to: - guarantee free and complete public access in future to the information stored digitally in public centres, and - draw up a comprehensive consept for ensuring that all public areas (libraries, archives, universities, etc.) particularly in rural

regions, can benefit to the full from the development of the Internet. Lastly, the Commission is asked to establish a portal for all Community venture capital instruments, including other information sources about financial instruments.

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

2000/2034(COS) - 28/05/2002

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.