Council Conclusions on
i2010 – Mid-term review

2877th TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND ENERGY Council meeting
Luxembourg, 12 June 2008

"THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1.   **WELCOMES**

a)   the Commission communication of 17 April 2008 on "Preparing Europe's Digital Future: i2010 Mid-term review".

2.   **RECALLS**

a)   the Council Conclusions of 1 December 2005 on „i2010 – A European Information Society for Growth and Employment", including the eAccessibility conclusions;

b)   the Riga Ministerial Declaration on eInclusion of 11 June 2006;

c)   the Council Conclusions of June 2007 on the "i2010 – Annual Information Society Report 2007", inviting the Commission to develop policies regarding future trends, in particular for the future of networks and the internet, the internal market and the users' perspective;

d)   the Ministerial Declaration of Lisbon of 19 September 2007 on eGovernment;

e)   the Conclusions of the Spring European Council of March 2008, inviting Member States to aim to make high-speed internet available to all schools by 2010 and to set ambitious national targets for household access as part of their National Reform Programmes.

P R E S S

3. ACKNOWLEDGES

a) the strategic importance of ICTs in EU policies for growth and jobs as highlighted recently in the assessment of the Lisbon strategy, the Single Market Review, the implementation of the Innovation Action Plan, the Information communication technologies Policy Support Programme, and the review of the consumer *acquis*;

b) the progress towards the Internet economy and the significant achievements in implementing comprehensive information society policies, both in the Member States to support the structural reform of national economies, and at the EU level to promote convergence, to strengthen research and innovation, to improve the delivery of public services and to make the information society more inclusive;

4. UNDERLINES

a) the need to develop European Information Society policies that improve competitiveness and address the gaps in performance, thus countering fragmentation within Europe in areas such as research and innovation, broadband developments, digital literacy, delivery of interoperable public services, and ICT take-up by businesses, with particular attention being paid to SMEs;

b) the need to identify trends and obstacles emerging in the progress towards an ubiquitous information society and assess how they challenge current policies;

c) that promoting market-driven investment and innovation in the field of ICTs, and a Single Market for the Information Society and media, including through the review of the regulatory framework for electronic communications, remains one of the main objectives of the i2010 initiative;

d) that the Single Market requires to promote the free movement of knowledge and innovation - the 'fifth freedom', encouraging *inter alia* open access to knowledge and open innovation - by removing the barriers which prevent the EU from further developing and exploiting ICT on a pan-European scale;

e) that ICT has a role to play to close major gaps in the Single Market, streamline procedures and reduce the administrative burden for citizens and businesses, notably through eGovernment, e-inclusion and cross-border and pan-European interoperability of public services with continuous effort given to the definition and broader uptake of open technical standards and publicly available specification;

f) that ICT is an important driver for innovation and its role in this respect could further enhance existing lead market initiatives for eHealth, pre-commercial public procurement, using ICT to address climate change and energy efficiency, or promote the role of eInfrastructures in the global research environment;

g) the need to provide the privacy and data protection in innovative ICT products and services (such as RFID) to increase the user awareness, trust and confidence in order to promote and ensure broad acceptance and use;

h) the need to develop appropriate measures to improve e-skills and the uptake of ICT in order to contribute to innovativeness, productivity and employability and to better respond to global challenges;

i) the European i2010 initiative on eInclusion as a strategic framework to boost the effective participation of groups at risk of exclusion, improve the quality of life through the use of ICTs, and address major EU challenges such as the ageing population, employment and equal opportunities;

j) the need for a long term agenda to address users' expectations and concerns regarding interoperability, the use of and access to online services, copyrighted and user-created content, content quality, information accuracy, the integrity of information, privacy and the protection of minors;

k) the importance of broadband coverage of the population for the inclusion in the information society;

l) the strategic importance of the development of fixed and mobile very high speed broadband networks. This development is a condition for European competitiveness, disruptive innovations and next generation services.

5. WELCOMES THE INTENTION OF THE COMMISSION TO

a) develop the long-term agenda for information society and media policies with a particular focus **on achieving a fully functioning** Single Market and eInclusion, the user's needs and their role**s** in the ubiquitous information society**,** and further advancement of knowledge on ICTs and their use;

b) assess the overall contribution of ICT to the modernisation of European economies and societies, the performance of the EU in the Internet economy and its readiness to face future challenges;

c) **further develop** the Internet of Things through **appropriate initiatives**.

6. INVITES THE COMMISSION TO

a) to promote the necessary measures to create appropriate conditions and to identify the policy challenges, in cooperation with Member States, to ensure that future developments in networks and Internet continue to benefit the economy, improve EU's competitiveness and serve the needs of citizens;

b) report back in time for the 2009 Spring European Council on its assessment of the overall contribution of ICT to the modernisation of European economies and societies, the performance of the EU in the Internet economy and its readiness to face future challenges**;**

c) initiate in the autumn of 2009, in consultation with the Member States, a review of the i2010 action plan, to prepare the future Information society policy, decisions and actions to reach the future Lisbon Strategy Objectives;

d) develop, in consultation with the Member States a Broadband **Performance** Index, to be published together with the values observed for each of its component indicators, that will seek to compare broadband developments in the Member States and their propensity to further take up of advanced services and the benefits that arise from their use.

7. **INVITES THE MEMBER STATES TO**

   a) strengthen their efforts to increase the contribution of ICTs to economic structural reforms as part of the national reform plans in the context of the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs;
   b) contribute to reducing disparities in information society developments across the EU by promoting market-driven investment, in particular through rapid implementation of relevant national programmes, aimed at increasing broadband coverage and multiplatform access, and speeding ICT R&D and take up, making use, where appropriate, of EU structural funds, in line with the Community legislation;
   c) stimulate research in ICT to close the gap with the main competing regions in the world and to contribute to more integrated and effective innovation systems;
   d) create the appropriate conditions for the rolling-out of infrastructures for very high speed access (fixed and mobile), which are strategic for European competitiveness;
   e) define ambitious targets for broadband penetration at the national level, with a view to reaching, **by enhancing competition**, an EU average broadband penetration of 30% compared to the 2007 level of 20%, and a national penetration level of at least 15% by 2010;
   f) implement an eInclusion strategy, which will enable to meet the Riga declaration objectives and commitments;
   g) promote the adoption of IPv6 and the strategic need of developing and adopting sensor based networks, including those based on RFID.
   h) To keep momentum in the implementation of eGovernment in order to improve service delivery, reduce administrative burdens for business and citizens, and to increase participation.

8. **INVITES ALL STAKEHOLDERS TO**

   a) develop and promote user-friendly products and services for improved accessibility;
   b) develop innovative and interoperable ICT applications, standardisation and increase reliability and security, in order to maximize the benefits of ICT to business productivity;
   c) identify new business models and innovative technological solutions, which can promote competition and strengthen consumer trust on the use ICT products and services."

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