eSEEUROPE Initiative@Newsletter

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Note from the Editor

We are pleased to bring you the fourth issue of the eSEEurope Initiative Newsletter. We welcome comments, ideas for articles and general feedback. Please contact Nera Nazečić, Head of eSEEurope Secretariat and editor of this Newsletter, by phone: +387 33 276 836 or e-mail: nnazecic@undp.ba. Please visit our web site:http://www.eseeinitiative.org/

MOLDOVA

On February 23, 2005— the Government of the Republic of Moldova has endorsed the National Strategy on Information Society Development, entitled "Electronic Moldova". The main premise and the strategic objective set in the IS Strategy is that the Republic of Moldova will become an active and competitive member of the new knowledge-based economy; thus ensuring espousal of democratic approach in fully achieving economic development and prosperity. Moldova's Government shall assume the leading role in the process of implementation of this important strategic objective, with the purpose to create necessary environment for developing of the national Information Society, with the ultimate goal to enable full integration with the European Union.

Written by Ms. Natalia Mociu, e-Envoy of Moldova

As stipulated by the IS Strategy, another important objective to be taken in consideration in the process of development of Information Society will be to ensure sustainable economic growth and reduce poverty by shifting from traditional to ICT-based economy. Thus, modern technologies will be widely applied in industry, agriculture, transport, commerce and service sectors.

Special focus will be on recognizing and consequently providing the necessary legal provisions for protecting the rights of each citizen to communicate and to be informed by guaranteeing him/her universal access to information and communication resources. Linking to this, another akin area of practice outlined in the IS Strategy will be to extend democratic practices, by making governance process more efficient, thus raising the

H.E. Mr. Vladimir Molojen, Minister of Information Development, facilitating final discussion of the draft Strategy with National Commission for Information Society.

responsibility of Government to citizens and vice versa. Another action which will be taken in the context of the IS Strategy will be to develop information culture by enabling anyone, regardless of sex, ethnic origin, language, faith and social status, to have access to training programs in informatics.

Implementation of these strategic goals laid down in the IS Strategy will path the way for Moldova to fully integrate into regional and international information space. However, realization of these basic objectives set in the Strategy requires major interventions in the legal and procedural framework, central and local public administration, theoretical and applied science, educational system, manufacturing industry and ICT services sector as well as in information infrastructure.

The Strategy includes chapters on strategic priorities, goals and areas for intervention, fast extension of the national IS infrastructure, e-Governance and e-Democracy, which requires public administration reform and provision of improved services to citizens. In addition, there are plans to include e-Economy, e-Education, e-Science, e-Culture, e-Health as decisive factors of development. Separate chapter of the Strategy is dedicated to Information Society and Millennium Development Goals. Undivided attention is paid to the mechanisms of implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Strategy. Enclosed to the Strategy is a short report on Moldova's e-Readiness for Building Information Society, e-Readiness Index Estimate, Estimate of Digital Access Index, Estimate of Info-State Indices and Monitoring Indicators for Moldova.

Along with the approval of the IS Strategy, the Government adopted the Action Plan for implementation of the Strategy, which includes specific activities for short, medium and long term goals and specifies responsible government bodies and agencies. Both documents can be found online: http://www.registru.md/law_underlaw_en/guvern_7_en/.

Implementation of the e-Governance component of the National Strategy "e-Moldova"

As a follow-up of the project on elaboration on the National IS Strategy, Ministry of Information Development and UNDP office in Moldova have initiated new project entitled: "Implementation of e-Governance component of the National Strategy". The official presentation of the project document, organized by the Ministry and UNDP in end February 2005, joined representatives of interested ministries, non-governmental bodies, international organizations, business and academia. It is expected that the project will be started later this year.

The main goal of the project is to consolidate democracy and state institutions by actively involving citizens in political life, by facilitating non-discriminatory access to public information and improving the quality of public services

One of major outputs of the project will be to foster creation of a number of important documents and pilot projects, such as: series of relevant surveys, e-Governance concept, training of representatives of the public sector, decision makers and their counterparts, producing proposals to amend the Law on public servants, introducing the standard for Government web-sites and for exchange information within the Government web-sites, devising the operational government portal, etc.

Cabinet level body formed in accordance with the ToR adopted in eSEE Initiative : Ministry of Information Development

After the parliamentary elections held in Republic of Moldova on the 6th of March 2005, the former Prime Minister was approved for the second term. The Prime Minister put forward his new Governmental activity programme, which included proposals on the new Government structure. According to these proposals, a number of ministries and departments were restructured.

Thus, the former Department of Information Technologies was transformed into a Ministry of Information Development, established by the Law nr. 23-XVI from 14.04.2005, which is fully in line with the recommendation issues in eSEE Agenda and the related ToR for Cabinet Level Bodies. The present Ministry merged also the Telecommunications and Post Divisions from the former Ministry of Transport and Communications. From now on, all ICT related issues will be tackled by the Ministry of Information Society.

Information Society Development—Country Progress

SERBIA

Belgrade, April 2005: First Stakeholders Workshop: "Building up a National Strategy for an Information Society "

Written by Mr. Dragan Božić, e-Envoy for Serbia

Information Society development in Serbia is moving fast forward. On the first Steering Committee meeting in February 2005, the Project on National Strategy for IS development has been officially launched. The project is supported by the UNDP and it actively involved the representatives of all national stakeholders as well as international experts. Policy has been drafted and proposed to the Government in 2003, but due to political changes it has not been adopted. In the meantime, Policy has been replaced with the Strategy. It is expected that the Strategy will be proposed to the Government by the end of June 2005.

After two years of complex procedural processes, the Law on electronic signature was adopted in December 2004. The associated set of legal rules was prepared and submitted to the minister in charge. Legislation on e-Business / e-
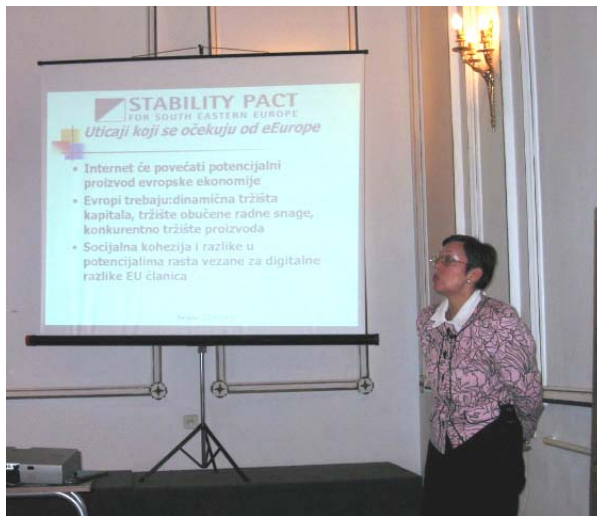
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In November last year the Law on free access to public information was adopted and there are high expectations related to its implementation. The law stipulates the minimum amount of public information to be published by every governmental institution, while any request for information of significance to the public has to be processed in the framework between fifteen and twenty days.

On the parallel plane, legislation on intellectual property rights was completed, alongside the Law on copyright and related rights. This Law regulates the copyright on data bases. The copyrights on patents, trademarks, models, designs and topographies of integrated circuits had been regulated earlier.

Dr. Marijana Vidas Bubanja, eSEE Initiative Chairperson– presenting the regional component at the First Stakeholders workshop

In order to implement common standard in IT education, IT professionals' association JISA is accredited as certificate authority for ECDL. Moreover, Agency for registration of companies became operational on 4th February 2005. In fact, software for register maintenance is already in use. Governmental bodies' common interests about data base which is generated in registration process, will be addressed in context of e-Government System development.

In addition, 1 Gbit/sec trans-country optical backbone of Academy Research Network has been developed, thus enabling international traffic at 68 Mbit/sec. Research Institutions, libraries, health and educational institutions are currently in the process of being connected. Currently, there is ongoing process to connect this network with the Hungarian network, in order to obtain 1 Gbit/sec toward GEANT. However, a lack in telecommunications infrastructure stands in the way to provide e-Government services. Information Technology and Internet Agency (ITIA) had organized the working group constituted by the representatives of relevant institutions in order to address this issue, but EAR support failed.

A seminar about standardization and automation of local governments' work and documents flow has recently been organized by ITIA. More than a hundred community and vendor representatives took part in this event, asking for additional support. ITIA's commitment is achieved because most data needed by the central governmental bodies is initially generated at local governments' bodies. That's why ITIA will support local governments' information system development. The latest news is that monopoly on telecommunication market in Serbia has finally been stopped. Expectations for obtaining better and cheaper connections are rising high.

eSEE Events, WG Meetings and Announcements

eSEE Ministerial Conference Prep Meeting held in Belgrade

Written by Ms. Nera Nazečić, Head of eSEE Secretariat

On 20 May eSEE Working group met in Belgrade to take part in preparatory meeting for the eSEE Ministerial conference, which will be hosted by the Greek Government in Thessaloniki, Greece on 30 June- 1st July in organization of Stability Pact through eSEE Secretariat, UNECE, UNDP, INA and all the countries of the region. This preparatory meeting was an occasion for all the

E-Envoys and Appointed Senior Policy Officials of eSEE Initiative engaged in working group discussion

Mr. Duško Lopandić, National Coordina-tor of the Stability Pact for SEE and Assistant Minister of International Economic Relations welcomed the meeting participants, emphasizing that eSEE is an internal priority for activities of the Office of the National Coordinator of the Stability Pact for SEE in Serbia, particularly due to the fact that eSEE Initiative serves as the exceptional example and embodiment in achievement of one of the key goals of the Stability Pact to develop the regional ownership.

Preparatory meeting was devoted to obtaining consensus on the three main aspects of the ministerial conference, which pertain to finalization of the signing of the bSEE MoU, endorsing the new set of eSEE agenda deadlines and addressing the preparatory process for the WSIS.

Dr. Marijana Vidas Bubanja, eSEE Initiative Chairperson, Mr. Michael C. Mozur, Deputy Special Coordinator for the Stability Pact and Mr. Bernard Snoy, Director of the WT II f the Stability Pact

This preparatory meeting was also a back to back meeting to the ICT for development workshop organized by EBRD. Mr. Motoo Kusakabe, Senior Counselor to the President of EBRD, presented to the working group the results of the questionnaire, which was prepared by EBRD in cooperation with eSEE Secretariat, in order to assess the overall level of in IS development eSEE Member states.

Mr. Yuri Misnikov, UNDP Regional Policy Advisor, provided the update on implementation of UNDP funded Interim Impact Assessment "Mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the eSEE Agenda Initiative in the Western Balkans countries from the information society policy change perspective. Taking into consideration the progress made by the eSEE Agenda signatories, particularly the fact that formulation of policies will be in place by the end of the year, the assessment aims to propose the set of new collective priorities for the region in the next period. Results this assessment will provide an opportunity to eSEE working group to design the next generation of eSEE Agenda activities.

The working group has agreed that this new generation of eSEE Agenda or eSEE Agenda+ should be endorsed at the next Ministerial conference after the last eSEE Agenda deadline, which was shifted to June 2006 has been fulfilled by all the Member States.

Next eSEE working group meeting will be held in early autumn, tentatively in Slovenia.

eSEE Events, WG Meetings and Announcements

ICT Development Strategies for Transition Economies Workshop

In cooperation with eSEE Initiative, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development has organized the workshop on "ICT Development Strategies for Transition Economies" in Belgrade on 21 May 2005 at the time of the EBRD Annual Meeting. This workshop has provided opportunity to further explore the ground for cooperation and added important political dimension by drawing attention of eSEE Governments about the importance of coordination of activities in the field of ICT on a regional level. Workshop was attended by the Ministers and senior officials in ICT policy making from Central Asia, and Caucasus countries under Early Transition Country Initiative of EBRD and Western Balkan countries, Serbia and Montenegro and Estonia as well as resource persons from Japan, Taiwan and Europe

For more information about the conference, including conference papers and presentations, please visit the workshop web site on: http://www.ictseminar.org/.

eSEE Ministerial Conference, Thessaloniki, 30 June– 01 July 2005

Written by Ms. Nera Nazečić, Head of eSEE Secretariat

Ministers in charge of Information and Communication Technologies Sector from the Southeast European countries will participate the Regional Ministerial Conference on Information Society, in Thessaloniki, Greece between 30th June and 1st July 2005. The aim of the Ministerial Conference is to take stock and review the progress achieved so far under auspices of Stability Pact eSEE Initiative, sign the MoU on Unified Regional Broadband and discuss continuation of the eSEE Agenda as a joint action plan for development of information society in this region, as a prerequisite for more profound integration of SEE region in European technological and developmental currents.

Thessaloniki

The States, which will be invited to participate in this Ministerial conference, are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Serbia and Montenegro, as well as UNMIK, EU, EU acceding countries Bulgaria and Romania, plus Turkey, as a candidate country.

The Conference aims to increase awareness among growing number of internal stakeholders and wide external audience including EU officials about the eSEE Agenda and provide leverage necessary for mobilization of resources needed to implement the Agenda in full and in an accelerated manner. Business partnerships are seen as the key instruments of the accelerated advancements both in infrastructure development and in e-governance applications to help the public sector serve better citizens and businesses, especially medium and small. The ultimate goal is to strengthen the efforts of the region to build sound economic environment as a part of European Integration processes.

The plan is to provide input for the review of eSEE Agenda, as the key regional action plan for development of Information Society in Southeastern Europe. Therefore, the first findings of "Interim assessment of the implementation of the eSEE Agenda" prepared by UNDP RBEC Bratislava will be presented. Participants will also sign the Memorandum of Understanding on the Broadband for Southeastern Europe Initiative (bSEE), hold a thematic session on e-democracy and make a joint regional input to the second World Summit on Information Society, that will be held in Tunisia in November.

Organizer of the Conference is the Hellenic Ministry of Transport and Communications, together with the Stability Pact for Southeast Europe, United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), UNDP Regional Bureau in Bratislava, Electronic Southeast Europe (eSEE) Secretariat of eSEE Initiative, INA Telecommunications Institute from Greece and all countries in the region of South Eastern Europe.

For more information about eSEE Ministerial conference, please visit the web site:

http://www.yme.gov.gr/viewpage.php?section=324%20

UNDP led Interim Assessment: evaluation of eSEE Agenda

Written by Mr. Vikas Nath, Independent consultant and Ms. Nera Nazečić, Head of eSEE Secretariat

As a next step towards coordinated Information Society development in SEE region, UNDP Regional Support Center in Bratislava, in consultation with the eSEE Member State Governments, is conducting Interim Impact Assessment "Mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the eSEE Agenda in the Western Balkans countries from the information society policy change perspective". This assessment is done with the purpose to evaluate the progress made under the auspices of Stability Pact eSEE Initiative and to assist eSEE working group in identifying the new set of joint regional priorities in information society development.

Two independent consultants, Mr. Vikas Nath and Mr. Sean Siochru, are currently visiting the relevant Gov-

Delegation of Moldova, consulting with Mr. Nath. From right to left: Mr. Sergiu Sytnic, Ministry of Information Development, Mr. Oleg Lozan, Public Health School, Ms. Maria Postevca, Translator, Vikas Nath, Independent Consultant

ernment counterparts in the region to assess the policy level changes which occurred in the area of Information Society development after signing of the eSEE Agenda by members of the Stability Pact in October 2002.

First findings indicate that one of key breakthroughs achieved under umbrella of eSEE Initiative is creation of national cabinet level bodies responsible for implementation of strategy for information society. In fact, in Serbia and Macedonia, efforts are ongoing to reorganize the functions of existing ministries and departments, to create a lead agency which will have the task of achieving the information society vision. The process of fostering policy level discussions on electronic commerce, digital signatures, data protection and privacy laws, right to information laws and e-business strategy development, has also been a major success.

From right to left: Mr. Victor Cheibas- private sector, Mr. Victor Chitoroaga- Soros Moldova ,Mr. V. Sidorenco- Technical University of Moldova, Mr. Anatolie Morosan,-InfoCom, Mr. Ion Casian- Ericsson Moldova, President Victor Besliu- Technical University of Moldova

Assessment also points to major support provided by UNDP in catalyzing policy responses to specific targets set under the eSEE Agenda. In particular, indispensable support was provided in the process of formulation of national information society strategies and action plans. Bringing together of highly talented and experienced representatives from the public, private sector and the civil society to form the working groups for strategy formulation is perceived as added value by the eSEE member state governments. This focus on inclusive and participatory processes has enhanced the strategic value of information society development activities within the eSEE Initiative member states.

From 2002, UNDP has been backing eSEE Initiative through Sarajevo based eSEE Secretariat. Assessment affirms that eSEE Secretariat championed in providing regional identity and visibility to the Initiative. It is acting as an anchorage, knowledge base and key focal point for regional cooperation. Importantly, through periodic monitoring of progress against the targets, eSEE Secretariat is encouraging

signatory countries to achieve the strategic goals of the eSEE Agenda.

Chairperson of the eSEE Initiative, Dr. Marijana Vidas Bubanja, who is also team leader for IS strategy formulation in Serbia said: „In addition to the breakthroughs in two key strategic objectives of the Initiative, remarkable success has been achieved in the area of promotion of Information Society for development through launch of various ICT projects, exchange of best practice, IS conferences, workshops and seminars. The necessary momentum has been built and the next step of eSEE Initiative will be to make sure that the region swiftly moves from policy making to implementation of the action plans."

In this context, results of the Assessment will be used by the eSEE working group for fine tuning of the eSEE Agenda to the changed reality and ultimately lead to creation of next generation of the eSEE Agenda activities. In addition, recommendation will be issued to address the new content which is becoming increasingly more relevant, such as e-government, e-commerce, universal service etc, in order to increase effectiveness and ensure continued relevance of eSEE Agenda for the signatory countries in building information societies. On the other hand, results of the assessment will provide opportunity for stronger support and mobilization of resources needed to implement the Agenda in full. It will also help the region to stay on track with the new strategic plans of European Union.

Current Activities and Forthcoming Events

"bSEE" Unified Regional Broadband Initiative

Taken from bSEE Concept Paper, written by. Mr. Pantelis Angelidis, INA Director

The creation and nurturing of a knowledge-based society in SEE is essential in order to enhance and maintain the region's international competitiveness. A key factor of realizing this auspicious venture is the provision of competitive, high-quality infrastructure and services. Broadband Communications can be used as an *accelerator* of economic development, increasing worker productivity and demanding the creation of jobs. In other words, Broadband creates opportunities for bundling services together and enables operators to offer more services to consumers at lower prices, creating added efficiencies in both time and money. New or offshoot industries are created and as penetration rates grow, the demand for computer, home networking equipment, wireless handheld devices and apparatus that facilitate broadband use rises. Economic benefits are also attributed to indirect factors, including increased e-commerce, reductions in commuting, increased consumption of entertainment, Internet telephony and savings in healthcare as a result of sophisticated telemedicine. For the enterprise sector, economic benefits result from efficiencies in the distribution of goods, services and information, while economic growth is also driven by new investment in network infrastructure, Web-based applications, end-user devices and related applications.

Grasping the opportunities afforded by the Information Age and developing communications infrastructure and services is essential, in order to attract and retain inward investment, stimulate job creation and ensure a fully inclusive society. Broadband high-speed always-on connectivity represents the next phase in the evolution of the digital era and underpins the information society. Therefore, widespread availability of open-access, affordable, always-on broadband infrastructure and services for businesses and citizens is critical and should be made a key policy priority for the Governments of the SEE region. Furthermore, the European Union should invest politically and economically in this process, since it will benefit from the establishment of a gradually unified ICT environment in SEE, which is geographically surrounded by EU member states.
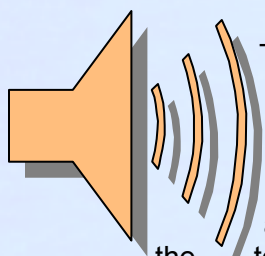
Consequently, deploying broadband communications infrastructure and services in SEE countries could

make a reality of the leapfrogging effect, which is needed to realize the much desired convergence of the region to the European socio-economic standards. Considering the above, INA suggested taking affirmative action, focused on the development of a unified broadband market in SEE that will be interconnected with the European and Global networks. In this context, the Initiative for 'bSEE' (broadband South Eastern Europe) development was conceived under the auspices of eSEE Initiative and its initial conceptual description was included in the main conclusions of the *Workshop on Telecommunications at the 10th Thessaloniki Forum, 24-25 of May 2004,* which takes into account the guidelines of the European Union and the Stability Pact. A corresponding MoU between the targeted SEE Governments has been drafted, with the intention to be signed at the Regional Ministerial Meeting that is organized by the Stability Pact, UNECE and INA, under the auspices of the Greek authorities, for the summer of 2005 in Thessaloniki. This Ministerial Meeting will serve the purpose of assessing the progress achieved under the framework of the eSEE Agenda and preparing the SEE input to WSIS-2.

Current Activities and Forthcoming Events

SEEFIRE– SEE Fibre Infrastructure for Research and Education Launched

SEEFIRE kick-off meeting, Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 7-8 April 2005— SEEFIRE is a special support action co-funded by the FP6 programme of the European Commission. The project builds on the results of existing IST projects by producing studies on the options available for network infrastructure and the strategies for the development of research and education networking in southeast Europe. SEEFIRE will: establish a benchmark of existing and potentially available optical fibre for National Research and Education Networks (NRENs) in the region; make an analysis of the technical options available for the deployment of dark fibre and the management of optical transmission by NRENs in the region; report on economic aspects and regulations; disseminate information and increase awareness about dark-fibre deployment both at technical and policy-making levels.

TERENA coordinates the SEEFIRE Project, a special support action benefiting from 350,000 euro funding from the European Commission. The project will build on the success of the SEEREN Project and prepare for the next generation of networks for research and education in southeast European countries. The project started on 1 March 2005 and by its end in February 2006 will establish a benchmark of existing and potentially available optical fibre for NRENs in the region; make an analysis of the technical options available for the deployment of dark fibre and the management of optical transmission by NRENs in the region; report on economic aspects and regulations; disseminate information and increase awareness about dark-fibre deployment both at technical and policymaking levels.

Connectivity of NRENs in Europe and the backbone of the pan-European Research Network (GÉANT) has traditionally been based upon individual point-to-point circuits obtained through leases from telecom operators. The SEEREN network is based on connectivity services contracts with these operators, which ran until the end of 2004. With the contribution of GN2, some of those connections have been extended into 2005. Without the financial support of the European Commission, NRENs in this region could not afford these services. For the next generation of this network to be self-sustainable, more affordable alternatives for NRENs in the region need to be explored, such as the acquisition of their own optical fibre infrastructure. The recent progress in technology for optical transmission at high speed has made the deployment of owned or leased fibre networks a reality for NRENs. SEEFIRE will make a first step in the direction of a cost-effective gigabit network in SEE, connecting researchers and universities in the region with other research users in Europe and worldwide. In doing so, the project will contribute to reducing the digital divide that affects many countries in SEE, due in part to past political and economic circumstances.

Taken from: http://www.terena.nl/news/2005/newsflash167.pdf
For further information: http://www.seefire.org/about.php?language=en

i2010: Commission Launches 5-year Strategy to Boost Digital Economy

i2010 - A European Information Society for growth and employment— On 1 June The European Commission adopted the initiative "i2010: European Information Society 2010" to foster growth and jobs in the information society and media industries. i2010 is a comprehensive strategy for modernising and deploying all EU policy instruments to encourage the development of the digital economy: regulatory instruments, research and partnerships with industry. The Commission will in particular promote high-speed and secure broadband networks offering rich and diverse content in Europe.

Background: The need for a new initiative is driven by three factors that call for a reassessment of the objectives: New challenges: Information Society is moving from a "pilot phase" to a "wide deployment" as the ICT world becomes more mature and global. Since 2000, the ICT context has changed substantially, not only from a technological point of view (e.g. 3G, Ipv6, nanotechnologies, convergence, a new generation of computers, ambient intelligent scenarios…) but also for economic players (for instance, with the entrance into a major deployment phase, with the end of the burst of the Internet bubble, better internal market regulation, and the development of public-private partnerships).

The forthcoming closure of the eEurope 2005 Action Plan: the current Action Plan will finish at the end of 2005. Following from this, a natural expectation arise to discuss the future of an Information Society (IS) policy initiative at the EU level. The revision of the Lisbon Strategy: The last year of eEurope 2005 coincides with the mid-term review of the Lisbon Agenda. The Report from the High Level Group chaired by W. Kok makes a strong recommendation for Europe to reap the full benefits of ICT: "*In order to ensure future economic growth, the EU needs a comprehensive and holistic strategy to spur on the growth of the ICT sector and the diffusion of ICT in all parts of the economy*". The focus on ICT in the renewed Lisbon Agenda is based on the recognition of the pivotal role of Knowledge and Innovation.

In November 2004, the European Commission published a Communication on the challenges to be addressed by a European Information Society strategy up to 2010. This Communication highlights the need to increase research and investment in information and communication technologies, and to promote their take-up throughout both public and private sectors. The adoption of the Challenges Communication gave the opportunity to go one step further by consulting stakeholders more directly. The results of these consultations highlight the changes expected for a new strategy and provide a valuable contribution to its definition. The Challenges Communication was discussed at the December Telecom Council and the Council Resolution invited the Commission to prepare the follow-up of the eEurope 2005 Action Plan. The Commission committed to the publication of a full Communication strategy in time for the June 2005 Telecom Council.— Taken from http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/i2010/index_en.htm

Commission to light up Europe's world-leading networking infrastructure for scientists and students— *14 June*— GÉANT2, Europe's world-class research networking infrastructure, will from now on use pulsed light (photons), rather than electrons, to carry huge volumes of research data faster than ever before. Dark fibre-optic cables offering a performance of up to 320 Gigabit per second are lit to process data for advanced applications such as high-energy physics experiments or to connect radio telescopes worldwide. Europe's research network will thereby supply unprecedented computing power to an estimated three million users from over 3,500 academic institutions in 34 countries across Europe. Compared with similar research networks in the US or in Asia, GÉANT2 innovates by seamlessly combining dark fibre with more traditional broadband technology, notably to supply research networking services to schools, via its