



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council Conclusions on "Post i-2010 Strategy - towards an open, green and competitive knowledge society"¹

*2987th TRANSPORT, TELECOMMUNICATION and ENERGY Council meeting
Brussels, 18 December 2009*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1. WELCOMES

- (a)** The Commission's intention to come forward with a follow-up new initiative to succeeding its i2010 strategy;
- (b)** The Presidency conclusions of 10 November 2009 on the conference "Visby Agenda - creating impact for an eUnion 2015".

2. RECALLS

- (a)** [The Council resolution of 18 December 2009 on a "Collaborative European approach on Network and Information Security";²]
- (b)** [The Council conclusions of 18 December 2009 on "Transforming the Digital Dividend into Social Benefits and Economic Growth";³]

¹ DK parliamentary scrutiny reservation
² [...]
³ [...]

P R E S S

- (c) The Council conclusions of 4 December 2009 "Towards a competitive, innovative and eco-efficient Europe - a contribution by the Competitiveness Council to the post-2010 Lisbon agenda";⁴
- (d) The Council Conclusions of 4 December 2009 on "The Future of ICT Research, Innovation and Infrastructures";⁵
- (e) The agreement reached on 25 November 2009 on the Regulatory Framework on for Electronic Communications Networks and Services;
- (f) The Ministerial Declaration of Malmö of 18 November 2009 on "e-Government";
- (g) The Commission Communication of 28 October 2009 on "A public-private partnership on the Future Internet";⁶
- (h) The Council conclusions of 21 October 2009 "Towards Sustainability: Eco-Efficient Economy in the context of the post 2010 Lisbon Agenda and the EU Sustainable Development Strategy";⁷
- (i) The Commission Recommendation of 9 October 2009 on "Mobilising Information and Communications Technologies to facilitate the transition to an energy-efficient, low-carbon economy";⁸
- (j) The Commission Communication of 4 August 2009, "Europe's Digital Competitiveness Report - Main achievements of the i2010 strategy 2005-2009";⁹
- (k) The Prague Declaration of 20 April 2009 on "A new European approach for safer Internet for children";¹⁰
- (l) The Council conclusions of 31 March 2009 on "Accessible Information Society";¹¹
- (m) The Commission Communication of 30 March 2009 on "Critical Information Infrastructure Protection - Protecting Europe from large scale cyber-attacks and disruptions: enhancing preparedness, security and resilience";¹²
- (n) The conclusions of the Spring European Council of March 2009, recalling the fundamental role of telecommunications and broadband development in terms of European investment, job creation and overall economic recovery and inviting the Commission to develop a European broadband strategy, by the end of 2009, in close cooperation with stakeholders;
- (o) The Council conclusions of 27 November 2008 on "Future networks and the Internet".¹³

4 doc. 17179/09
5 doc. 16128/09
6 doc. 15279/09
7 doc. 14891/09
8 C(2009)7604 final
9 doc. 12600/09
10 doc. 9557/09
11 doc. 7612/09
12 doc. 8375/09
13 doc. 16616/08

3. RECOGNISES

- (a) That ICT is a key enabler which contributes significantly to economic growth and job creation in the EU and has a key role to play in helping the EU economy emerge from the current recession in a better position;
- (b) That the i2010 initiative has contributed, amongst other things, to increased access to broadband for EU citizens and a lessening of the digital divide;
- (c) That the establishment of a collaborative, digitally-enabled society and a position as an outward-looking technology leader and partner with the rest of the world is the best way for Europe to remain globally competitive and to positively affect and assist people in all aspects of life;
- (d) That the scope of ICT policy will need to expand from enabling the information society towards maximising the way in which ICT contributes to the EU's progress towards an open, green and competitive knowledge society;
- (e) That sector-specific ICT-related efforts need to fit within a holistic, integrated and horizontal approach to policy shared by all involved national and EU bodies dealing with ICT issues, so as to allow for a broader impact and deeper understanding of the complex, multi-dimensional issues at hand;
- (f) That it is crucial to ensure that policy decisions take into account the broad scope of ICT in ensuring that information flows as freely as possible between societal domains;
- (g) That, although ICT is fundamental to the running of EU economies across all sectors, significant barriers to implementing an ICT-based knowledge society and to establishing a well functioning internal market remain and need to be addressed as a matter of urgency;
- (h) That the EU plays a leading role in the area of online safety of children and the promotion of their safe and responsible use of the Internet;
- (i) That ICT plays an important role in reducing overall energy consumption in both the private and public sectors and contributes to Member States efforts in meeting their commitments on CO² emissions;
- (j) That having a single European information space offering affordable and secure high bandwidth communications and rich and diverse content and services is an important policy objective.

4. UNDERLINES IN GENERAL

WITH REGARD TO BROADBAND AND THE INTERNET

- (a) The importance of broadband, including mobile, access for all users as the platform for the development of Internet-based services that will deliver productivity gains for European businesses, from small to large, thereby contributing to European competitiveness;
- (b) The need to address the issues surrounding the prerequisites for sustainable investment and competition in Next Generation Networks (NGNs) and services, including where appropriate joint use of infrastructure, public funding and regulatory measures where competition is not effective;

- (c) The importance of fostering the open, decentralised and dynamic nature of the Internet, promoting its further expansion on the basis of open technical standards and contributing to innovation, interoperability with other platforms, open participation and ease of access so as to guarantee that it continues to be an empowering platform for all parts of society;
- (d) That, taking into account the provisions of the revised framework for electronic communications, a debate on net neutrality is necessary and that the Commission, following its declaration on net neutrality, reports to the Council and the European Parliament before the end of 2010;
- (e) That, in view of the fact that ICT and the Internet are increasingly used by individuals for the creation and uploading of content, and to publish opinions and views, future policies should take into account changes that the broadening of content production will bring about, including the benefits for media pluralism, democracy and the sharing of knowledge;

WITH REGARD TO PRIVACY, RESILIENCE, SECURITY AND TRUST

- (f) That the issues of privacy, resilience, security, trust and data protection will increase in importance in the years ahead and are important for the take-up of and innovation in services, taking into account that access to resilient networks is the foundation for the knowledge society which already underpins many aspects of our lives;
- (g) That the rights of users accessing online services should be safeguarded and that any restriction to freedom of expression on the Internet must be in accordance with international human rights law and with national legislation;
- (h) The importance of developing solutions to electronic identification that guarantee data protection and respect citizens' privacy and better control of their online personal information, such as in the context of RFID;

WITH REGARD TO ACCESSIBILITY, EMPOWERMENT AND INCLUSION

- (i) That, as ICT and the Internet are playing a fundamental role in the private, commercial, social and democratic spheres in the EU and in the quality of life of all of its citizens, e-Accessibility for everyone is key to achieving an inclusive, empowering knowledge society;
- (j) That a high level of ICT skills is a prerequisite for economic growth, new jobs and the development of European social, cultural and democratic life;
- (k) That, in order to promote Internet take-up and to profit from the potential benefits for the economy, there is a need for an e-skills strategy in order to ensure the continuous increase in skills and confidence for personal and professional use of the Internet;
- (l) That initiatives for ICT jobs and training should be promoted;
- (m) The need to achieve accessibility and inclusion by improving digital literacy through better ICT training and more attractive and usable services to make full use of the opportunities offered by the Internet and by seeking innovative ways to address barriers to Internet access.

5. EMPHASISES SPECIFICALLY

WITH REGARD TO BOOSTING RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT, INNOVATION AND SERVICE CREATION

- (a) That new knowledge obtained through increased research and development in the area of ICT should be used to promote the development of marketable products and services in a more effective manner;
- (b) That micro companies and SMEs are often the sources of major innovation in the field of ICT and that therefore a future policy agenda for Europe should clearly map out how innovation in such companies could be increased;
- (c) That European investment in research and technological development should take into account the particular characteristics of small, innovative companies that will create the services of the future but which often lack the resources to respond to EU calls for proposals;
- (d) That the EU must make use of the comparative advantage that a well functioning European digital Single market, in particular for creative content and services online, can bring by creating business opportunities and capitalising of Europe's diversity.
- (e) That the EU must increase its effort to encourage creation of and access to on-line content and services and that for this purpose, there is a need to find robust solutions that are practical, balanced and attractive both for users and rights holders alike;
- (f) That, as access to and re-use of public sector information leads to the creation of new innovative services and businesses, EU institutions and Member States should lead by example and improve and simplify the re-use of public sector information, including by making their structured data available, for example through publicly available catalogues;

WITH REGARD TO A GLOBALLY COMPETITIVE EU

- (g) That the EU should ensure that European ICT policies have a strong global outlook and that, in this regard, the EU should ensure that its own experiences of using ICT and developing associated policies and regulations contribute to international development;
- (h) That it is important for the EU to support a multi-stakeholder approach to Internet governance and strengthen international cooperation in network and information security.

WITH REGARD TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

- (i) That the importance of Green ICT in the context of an eco-efficient economy requires the setting of a concrete policy and research agenda, including low energy ICT, active incentives to 'go green', all of which help cutting carbon emissions and making the economy smart and green. EU institutions and the Member States should lead by example and promote the use of public procurement as a way to increase the use of emission-reducing technologies;
- (j) That the application of ICTs, digital tools, devices and solutions such as intelligent transport systems and smart grids will substantially contribute to energy savings and energy efficiency in all sectors as well as households, thus it will help cutting carbon emissions and reaching the ambitious 2020 energy-efficiency EU targets;

WITH REGARD TO E-GOVERNMENT

- (k)** That citizens and businesses should be empowered by next generation e-Government services designed around their needs and developed in collaboration with third parties, as well as by increased access to public information, strengthened transparency and effective means for involvement of stakeholders in the policy process. Mobility in the Single Market should be reinforced by seamless e-Government services for setting up and running of a business and for studying, working, residing and retiring anywhere in the EU;
- (l)** That efficiency and effectiveness should be enabled by a constant effort to use e-Government in innovative ways to reduce the administrative burden, improve organisational processes and promote a sustainable low-carbon economy through the use of e-Government services based on open and interoperable standards across the Single Market;
- (m)** That in order to effectively implement these policy priorities, appropriate key enablers and legal and technical preconditions, such as interoperable electronic identities, electronic signatures and electronic documents are very important;
- (n)** That promoting open ICT standards will facilitate interoperability, technological progress and extend the use of ICT to citizens and businesses;

WITH REGARD TO BENCHMARKING AND EVALUATION

- (o)** That in view of the need to be competitive globally, the objectives of the future EU strategy need to be measurable within benchmarking frameworks which will also aim at a meaningful comparison among the EU Member States and facilitate a comparison with other relevant countries with advanced ICT infrastructures. These frameworks should support the overall aim of the future strategy to contributing substantially to economic growth, job creation and helping reach environmental targets;¹⁴
- (p)** That ICT policy management should be reviewed throughout and between EU institutions with the aim of better promoting the effective and efficient development and implementation of EU policies on the European knowledge society.

6. INVITES THE COMMISSION TO

- (a)** Develop, in close cooperation with the Member States, a new 'Digital Agenda for Europe';
- (b)** Include a proposal in this new Digital Agenda for a European high-speed broadband strategy, which helps Member States identifying the route to financing high-speed broadband networks in Europe and ensuring a diversity of high-speed services. The Commission should also assess options to mitigate the gaps in high-speed broadband deployment across the EU while ensuring effective competition and analyse how to eliminate the barriers to the digital single market so as to allow businesses and users to offer and take up services across borders without limitations.

¹⁴ When available, public official data should be preferably used. Official data systems should evolve to answer to the new strategic objectives.

- (c) Come forward with its proposal for an ambitious, business-oriented and forward-looking European Innovation Plan with the necessary weight and scope to address major societal challenges, as well as a new Digital Agenda for Europe, to increase competitiveness;
- (d) Report to the Council on its public consultation on "Creative Content in a European Digital Single Market: Challenges for the Future";
- (e) Report to the Council on its public consultation on Universal Service obligations, in particular on the question whether high-speed broadband access should be part of these obligations;
- (f) Eliminate regulatory obstacles to cross-border online purchases with the objective of a fully functioning internal market and ensuring benefits for both consumers and businesses, including SMEs;
- (g) Continue in periodically evaluating financial tools supporting ICT policies.

7. INVITES THE MEMBER STATES TO

- (a) Take concrete steps in view of reaching a target of 100% broadband coverage by 2013 in all Member States of the EU through pro-competitive market-based mechanisms wherever possible;
- (b) Develop strategies for Next Generation Networks in order to facilitate the efficient roll out of infrastructures for very high-speed access using the most appropriate technologies in a way which is sustainable, efficient and supports choice and diversity in services. NGNs are strategic elements that underpin European competitiveness and innovation and help bridging the digital divide;
- (c) Support the development of high speed mobile and wireless services throughout the territory including through allocating the digital dividend as soon as possible in a way which supports competition;
- (d) Implement the revised Regulatory Framework for Electronic Communications, Networks and Services as quickly as possible;
- (e) Strengthen the efforts to increase the contribution of ICT to economic structural reform as part of the European and national contribution to the Lisbon strategy for growth and jobs;
- (f) Contribute to reducing disparities in information society developments across the EU, in particular by assisting each other by exchanging good practice;
- (g) To support businesses, particularly SMEs in the take-up of ICT, high capacity broadband and advanced services, through suitable policy initiatives;
- (h) To support the actions identified in the Commission Recommendation on Mobilising Information and Communications Technologies to facilitate the transition to an energy-efficient, low-carbon.

8. INVITES THE COMMISSION AND THE MEMBER STATES TO:

- (a) Ensure that a renewed European ICT policy agenda contributes substantially to economic growth, job creation and the achievement of environmental targets thus enabling it to be a core element of a new Lisbon strategy beyond 2010;
- (b) Reinvigorate efforts to achieve competitive markets for ICT networks, products and services and also an enhanced single market for information society services for both consumers and business;
- (c) Do their utmost in ensuring the ubiquitous availability of high-speed, high-capacity, resilient and accessible digital communications networks, systems, tools and services, connected by the open Internet, considering the development of a society where ICT facilitates mass collaboration, increased communication as well as social and cultural participation;
- (d) Encourage the use by SMEs of Internet based services, such as cloud computing or software as service models, which significantly shift large fixed costs to variable costs and which would positively contribute to SME take-up and use of advanced services and to meet environmental goals;
- (e) Propose and implement, at national and EU level, policies for digital literacy, including aspects related to privacy, trust and protection of intellectual property, to stimulate further the take-up of high-speed broadband and services to fulfil the potential of the digital economy for Europe's competitiveness in terms of growth and jobs and for social inclusion and democratic participation;
- (f) Set ambitious Green ICT targets to reduce the carbon footprint of their operations generally, e.g. by promoting videoconferencing and other forms of electronic communications which reduces the need to travel;
- (g) Improve policies that aim to increase trust of consumers when making online purchases within the EU;
- (h) Implement the Ministerial Declaration on e-Government of the Malmö Conference;
- (i) Work together through the Future Internet Public Private Partnership and other mechanisms to ensure Europe remains at the leading-edge of the development of internet technologies.

9. INVITES STAKEHOLDERS TO

- (a) Contribute, with EU institutions and Member States, to the EU internal market by using open and interoperable standards and technologies;
- (b) To embrace new creative ways of sharing content e.g. by using “Creative Commons” licenses;
- (c) Adopt open models for communication network deployment to help boost innovation and drive demand;
- (d) Embrace ICT in their core business processes to improve productivity and competitiveness of EU businesses;

- (e) Adopt Green ICT to improve the EU's environmental sustainability by use of tele-working and all other means and ways of work, organisation, production and marketing activities;
 - (f) Work with EU institutions, Member States and other relevant parties to drive participation and improve resilience and safety online."
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