

Brussels, 1 June 2005



Commission launches five-year strategy to boost the digital economy

The Commission today 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.

“For many years, experts have been talking about digital convergence of communication networks, media content and devices”, said Viviane Reding, the Commissioner responsible for Information Society and Media. “Today, we see digital convergence actually happening. Voice over IP, Web TV, on-line music, movies on mobile telephones – all this is now reality. To enhance investment in this promising sector of the economy, we must provide a coherent regulatory framework for Europe’s digital economy that is market-oriented, flexible and future-proof. And we must focus our research spending on key information and communication technologies, such as nanoelectronics.”

In its i2010 initiative, the Commission outlines three policy priorities:

- to create an open and competitive single market for information society and media services within the EU. To support technological convergence with “policy convergence”, the Commission will propose: an efficient spectrum management policy in Europe (2005); a modernisation of the rules on audiovisual media services (end 2005); an updating of the regulatory framework for electronic communications (2006); a strategy for a secure information society (2006); and a comprehensive approach for effective and interoperable digital rights management (2006/2007).
- **to increase EU investment in research on information and communication technologies (ICT) by 80%.** Europe lags behind in ICT research, investing only €80 per head as compared to €350 in Japan and €400 in the US. i2010 identifies steps to put more into ICT research and get more out of it, e.g. by trans-European demonstrator projects to test out promising research results and by integrating small and medium sized enterprises better in EU research projects.).

- **to promote an inclusive European information society.** To close the gap between the information society “haves and have nots”, the Commission will propose: an Action Plan on e-Government for citizen-centred services (2006); three “quality of life” ICT flagship initiatives (technologies for an ageing society, intelligent vehicles that are smarter, safer and cleaner, and digital libraries making multimedia and multilingual European culture available to all (2007); and actions to overcome the geographic and social “digital divide”, culminating in a European Initiative on e-Inclusion (2008).

i2010 is the first Commission initiative to be adopted under the EU’s renewed Lisbon strategy. It focuses on the most promising sector of the EU economy: ICT account for 40% of Europe’s productivity growth and for 25% of EU GDP growth. Member States are asked to define National Information Society Priorities in their National Reform Programmes in mid-October 2005 to contribute to the objectives of i2010.

Further information on i2010 can be found at:

<http://europa.eu.int/i2010>

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