



## **eEurope Advisory Group**

*The Expert Section*

**Work Group N°3**

**“i2010”**

**The next five years in Information Society**

*« Nous ne coalisons pas les Etats,  
nous unissons des peuples »*

Jean Monnet

*2 February 2005*

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The Work Group would like to thank the European Commission services for their invaluable intellectual and logistic support, particularly, IPTS which welcomed Experts in Seville.

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*Annexes: (1) The outcome of the Seville meeting and the results of the Thematic Clusters; (2) slides from the presentation made during the eEurope Advisory Group on the 21<sup>st</sup> October 2004; and (3) narratives drawn up for the Seville meeting in order to show some concrete pictures of the future Information Society.*

### **Acknowledgements**

This report synthesises all the contributions expressed during the work done within WG 3, especially from the SWOT analysis, Delphi, the Thematic Clusters and the Seville workshop in October 2004.

Views expressed represent exclusively the position of the experts of the eEurope Advisory Group and does not commit the European Commission in any way.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As the main part of its Information Society policy pillar, the European Union has launched two Action Plans (eEurope 2002 and eEurope 2005) in order to play an active role of a catalyst between Member States. **The eEurope Action Plans have given a strong political momentum to achieve detailed short-term targets in order to build an Information Society in Europe** and to catch up with the US. Regarding results, these two Action Plans were successful. Five years after the launch of the first Action Plan and at mid-term of the Lisbon strategy, coinciding with the inauguration of a new Commission, the time is ripe for reflection on challenges and actions for the next five years (to 2010).

During the eEurope period (2000 – 2005), several developments have changed the context of initiatives at EU level. These evolutions point out the extent to which the Information Society context has evolved. **Indeed, in the last five years, a series of major changes have lead to substantial modifications in the political environment and the dimension of the Information Society.** All of these aspects have to be considered for prospective reflection:

1. Political: new constitutional treaty, enlargement to an EU 25, increasing role of the local public authorities...
2. Economic: the burst of the Internet bubble, an internal market regulation, development of public-private partnerships...
3. Technological: nanotechnologies, convergence, mobility, 3G, Ipv6, new generation of networks and computers, ambient intelligent scenarios...
4. Regulatory: a regulatory framework in electronic communication networks, directives on e-commerce and on e-signature...
5. Policy: eEurope 2005 Action Plan, Lisbon Agenda, review of the Structural Funds, FP6, IDA program...

As part of the Lisbon objectives to become “the most competitive knowledge-based economy by 2010”, **knowledge emerges as a central driver of our collective aspiration and a key engine of our common future.** Meeting the Lisbon Strategy poses the challenge of moving from a first generation eEurope to an accomplished political Initiative in the course of the next five years. In this context, during the first meeting of our Second Section on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2004, an open debate gave an opportunity to raise some core issues to be addressed for the future. The main ideas expressed point to the need of framing the information and technology challenges in the context of a new set of policy guidelines.

Moreover, the conclusions of the mid-term review of the current Action Plan have provided other useful inputs from stakeholders for this forward looking exercise. In addition, the various contributions to the review of the Lisbon Process have given a wider view on ICT policy in relation to the three pillars of Lisbon: growth and competitiveness, social cohesion, and sustainability. Other outputs, such as, the Price Waterhouse Coopers study and the IPTS contribution to FP7<sup>1</sup>, have been also already delivered.

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<sup>1</sup> *Input for FP 7 Consultation process of DG INFSO “Lessons learned and research avenues from FISTE Research”*

Putting all these contributions together, a basis for discussion could be drawn up, particularly in view of orientations indicated in the Conclusions of the Communication on the update of the eEurope 2005 Action Plan: *“The Lisbon Strategy is a strong political commitment to ensure that the European Union becomes the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy by 2010. If the European Union wants to play a leading role in the global Information Society, it is necessary that all three pillars of the Lisbon Strategy are fully implemented in ICT policy. These are growth and competitiveness, cohesion, and sustainability. These provide an orientation for consideration of the next steps beyond 2005, and beyond the timeframe of the current eEurope Action Plan. New policy guidance such as safeguarding citizen-user-consumer interests, providing industrial policy tools and increasing e-inclusion, should be taken into account.”*

**Therefore, a new mandate was given in May 2004 to the Second Section of the eEurope Advisory Group, in order to provide input to a strategic reflection on future challenges post-eEurope.** The special context is “re-thinking the European ICT Agenda”, and specifically the next policy programme running beyond 2005. A new work group (n°3) was set up after the two first ones on the territorial coverage of broadband and e-inclusion.

## **2. THE MANDATE OF THE WORK GROUP 3 AND ITS METHODOLOGY**

To cover the overall scope of this mandate, the work was organised in **two related and concomitant layers**. While the first layer was global and predominantly vision-oriented, the second layer was designed to be thematic and mainly issues-oriented.

*See slide 1 in annex 2*

In order to provoke a creative discussion on vision and strategy, the entire Section was invited to contribute to a **joint SWOT<sup>2</sup> analysis** as the first layer exercise, which was built on the idea of Europe as a global player. The analysis was conducted on the basis of an on-line interactive discussion till the end of July.

In consequence of the wealth of ideas that were generated and on time availability, the Section was subsequently invited to participate in a **prospective exercise**. This was intended to foster interactivity, cross-fertilisation and convergence of ideas on the future design of a ‘post eEurope’ with the support of European Commission Services, in particular IPTS (Joint Research Center), in a meeting that took place in Seville on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> October. In the meantime, experts had participated in a Delphi exercise with the support of the Fistera project, managed by IPTS. In Seville, the Second Section confronted its opinion to the results of the Fistera Delphi project, based on the contribution of about 500 European experts.

**The second layer comprised three Thematic Clusters** to guide and to deepen the reflection in areas considered as major trends for the future. The three thematic clusters (TC) were:

- ***TC 1: Governance, Citizenship and Cohesion***
- ***TC 2: Growth, Innovation and Sustainable Development***
- ***TC 3: People, Culture and Diversity***

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<sup>2</sup> SWOT is the acronym for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.

Three Discussion Groups were set up to address issues in each broad thematic cluster in order to provide recommendations to the Member States and the Commission through a series of questions:

- What are the main trends which could already be identified for the future and need to be taken into account for drawing up a new strategy? Are there any foreseen trend breaks in the next 5 years?
- What should be the role of technology development as a driving force for these themes? How do we assess the scope of IST policy for the future in terms of areas to be reinforced, cancelled or added?
- How could knowledge and learning institutions be (re)shaped to meet the new challenges ahead of us? What are the features of the Information Society that will have to be improved or enhanced to allow the emergence of a European-wide knowledge-based society?
- Is there a truly European model for the making of a knowledge and information society? What aspects have to be emphasised in international co-operation?
- What should be the role of public authorities as policy makers, not only at EU level, but also at national and local level; and/or co-ordination mechanisms? What will be the part of regulatory and legal aspects actions?

**In a previous stage, each Thematic Cluster identified key insights in seven domains: challenges, directions, stakeholders, obstacles, early movers, actions and tools.** Each discussion group was co-ordinated by TC Rapporteurs. The meeting in Seville was also an occasion for the thematic clusters to meet physically. Furthermore, narratives were drawn up for the Seville meeting in order to concretely illustrate the future Information Society. *See the outcome of the Seville meeting and the results of the Thematic Clusters in Annex 1, and the narratives in Annex 3.*

The results of the SWOT analysis and the Delphi exercise were finalised with the Thematic Clusters outcomes in mid-October, in order to complete a draft slide presentation. This presentation was submitted and generally agreed by the Second Section before being delivered to the Member States during the meeting of the eEurope Advisory Group on the 21<sup>st</sup> October.

The Second Section conducted its work by using a “soft and societal-driven” approach complementing the “hard and technology-driven” approach used by the Price Waterhouse Coopers study presented by the Dutch presidency. The Second Section took this into account as another major input on the reflection on the Future. *See slides 2 and 3 in Annex 2*

### 3. “THE EUROPEAN DREAM”

The most recent formulation of our European dream that was put forward in the Lisbon Agenda, in 2000, is vibrantly expressed as follows:

***“A new strategic goal needs to be defined for the next ten years: to make the European Union the world's most dynamic and competitive area, based on innovation and knowledge, able to boost economic growth levels with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion”.***

This dream dwells in our minds, documents and official statements. It fashioned our mandate and inspired our terms of reference.

The capacity to keep on dreaming and to nurture a common ambition is central to the realisation of our construction of Europe.

Jeremy Rifkin speaks of this dream in his most recent book. While describing the uniqueness of this European Dream he underscores some of its key features<sup>3</sup>:

***“The European Dream emphasizes community relationships over individual autonomy, cultural diversity over assimilation, quality of life over accumulation of wealth, sustainable development over unlimited material growth, deep play over unrelenting toil, universal human rights and the rights of nature over property rights, and global cooperation over the unilateral exercise of power”.***

For Rifkin, the European model, based on truly multicultural societies, a wealth of memory and identity, and a unique way of dealing with technologies will prevail in the new world order. In other words, the European way of life offers to the entire planet a powerful response to the overriding challenges of civilisation and cultural progress.

This recognition is certainly good for our self esteem.

However, we are still lagging behind in innovation, economic and technology growth. A new thrust is required to make our time come of age. This ambition can be translated as follows: We have been, we are and we will be a global power in a multi-polar world. It is not acceptable to be a secondary player.

This leads us to ask how viable is the dream, how can ICT make a difference and what are the strategic choices facing us in critical areas such as ICT for Knowledge, Education, Learning, Innovation, and Research & Development? What ICT policies could help trigger this dream making the EU a real champion and leader in the new global order? Moreover, what will Europe be selling to the rest of the world in 10 to 15 years time, and how can ICT help in making Europe and European processes, products and services come closer to market preferences now and in the future?

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<sup>3</sup> Rifkin, J. (2004). *The European Dream*. Cambridge: Policy Press, p. 3

The fact is that from recorded and documented history, Europeans are used to thinking and acting from a global perspective. Ancient Greece perfected philosophical thinking for betterment of the world; Rome legislated, not in confinement to strict borders, but thinking of the entire humanity; the European discoveries were meant to approximate peoples and cultures from all continents; the founding fathers of Enlightenment announced a new Age of Reason and Freedom for the modernisation of all societies.

This outreach is part of a branded European way of thinking, living and learning. It is in the mainstream philosophy of a European predicament.

Our work was organised around this series of key questions.

The task was to help deliver a vision for Europe 2010, and to arrive at proposals to shape a new ICT strategy for the next 5 years. To reach this result, we strongly benefited from all the thoughts expressed during the various phases of collective thoughts which translated in a European-wide concentration of ideas and thoughts.

## 4. LOOKING AHEAD... THINKING COLLECTIVELY

### 4.1 The SWOT analysis

The SWOT analysis gave an overall picture of how we see, and consider, Europe's position in global competition, and as a major player in an increasingly complex environment.

Europeans have many strong points to display. However, we must acknowledge the fact that Europe is also prone to weaknesses which we must be aware of. *See slide 4 in Annex 2*

When looking back in documented history, one finds that Europe has been in the driving seat of the world for a long time: we were among the finest global traders and the founding fathers of democracy; we were masters at doing business, at the cutting-edge of science and technology; we invented the shape of modern learning institutions (including over 800 years of successful universities); we led multicultural contacts for centuries in and outside of Europe; we were pioneers of global mobility.

In recent decades, we have boldly created a union of countries to be reckoned with, starting with 6 nations, then 12, then 15, and now 25 Member States brought together in the name of lasting peace and shared prosperity.

However, alongside this impressive track record of achievements, we must also deal with our weaknesses: fragmented markets, excessive regulations, ineffective state intervention, slow pace of innovation, ageing population and waste of senior experience.

To build a vision of Europe 2010 and beyond, it is essential that we learn to cope with these elements and face them in a constructive manner. One way is to identify other assets that we have which can be used to build our collective future. In this line of thinking, it is fair to underscore that we have integrated ten new member states bringing the total to 25, with a vision to increase this number in the future. Our creative lifestyle, the adoption of the Euro as a common currency, and our world class communication technologies rank high as recognisable strengths.

However, major threats are well and truly recorded in today's world, which could undermine our vision for a sustainable Europe in 2010 and beyond. The most obvious one is terrorism; this is an unknown quantity resulting in an unsafe world for all. Further, our continuous dependency on energy sources, with soaring oil prices, results in mounting environmental challenges.

As long as we are aware of these elements, we may prepare ourselves to seize the opportunities positively: our quality of life, our education, our long standing technology structure, our social infrastructures, the result of which may stimulate public/private investment, and to invite the "ageing" population into the work force, thus eliminating discrimination.

Europe can move towards global customisation of products and services and demanding cross-cultural markets.

## 4.2 The DELPHI exercise

As another participatory analysis, Experts contributed to a DELPHI exercise within the FISTERA Delphi survey managed by IPTS<sup>4</sup>. This survey aims at analysing the importance of ICT with respect to EU goals, by collecting views from experts across Europe. *See slide 5 in Annex 2.*

The results of the DELPHI exercise are presented in Annex 1 but some of the main findings can be summarised as follows:

- The development of Europe has a long way to go: the question of time has to be taken into account. It takes between 20 and 30 years just to deploy technology.
- We need a long term and well focused policy effort. There is nothing worse than a stop-and-go policy, particularly, in fast moving areas such as ICT. We need continuous and realistic policies.
- Whilst European players are thinking about how to do it, others, from other continents/countries such as Korea (e.g. the Korean 8-3-9 Action Plan), *just do it* and if we do not watch out, we will miss the boat completely.
- Contrary to what the press reports, we are interested in moving forward. Both public and private stakeholders have already expressed their strong desire to make things happen.

## 4.3 The Thematic Clusters results

The Thematic Clusters played a major role in our process to deliver a vision by providing fundamental orientations within clusters built for this occasion as guidance for thought. The results of the Thematic Clusters' work are fully described in Annex 1. They made a major contribution to our vision and their key outcomes are summarised henceforth.

### **Thematic Cluster 1: “Governance, Citizenship and Cohesion”**

Taking into account major social, economic and technological trends, a vision for governance, citizenship and cohesion for Europe in 2010 was formulated as follows: *to build a “social connectivity network”*. The vision is to build a society where all individuals are empowered, through ICT access and capabilities:

- To live, relate and work in the way they choose;
- To seize employment and education opportunities;
- To take part in local communities, in public affairs at all levels, and also into transparent and participatory democratic processes.

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<sup>4</sup> FISTERA mini-Delphi to eEurope's Second Section organised in three sections (R&D and social needs; EU goals and IST areas; 12 “Panoramic Delphis” (such as health, security, education and culture, ageing, ...) available at <http://les.man.ac.uk/PREST/fistera/default.htm>. “FISTERA Special Report to the eEurope Team” by C. Pascu, JC Burgelman and R. Compagno available at <http://fistera.jrc.es>

Opportunities for “connectivity and skills for all” will improve access to communication, employment, education and other services, generate more transparency and increase inclusion. The focus on the individual is one pillar of economic development through empowerment and skill building but also through higher levels of networking and community building (social capital).

### **Thematic Cluster 2: “Growth, Innovation and Sustainability”**

Thematic Cluster 2 proposed as a core vision the following idea: *“Every EU citizen as an active user and creator of networks of diversity to embrace the sustainable growth and prosperity of the European Union”*.

This view was built on top of several considerations. Among them:

- Every citizen should be an active member of society, including senior and disabled people.
- Europe is multilingual and multicultural. This richness can be used as a strategic advantage of Europe, exploiting diversity within social groups, language groups, cultures, “tribes”.
- Europe is a rapidly ageing society. Unless older people also produce, fewer people will have to produce more.
- Economic and innovation networks are global, and Europe needs to adopt a pro-active view to support its growth and innovation. Asian and US vendors are everywhere, they are competitors and collaborators, but they are also main customers for Europe.
- Europe is equipped to compete on the basis of capabilities in managing diversity. This is not the case for the US or for Asian countries where homogeneity has been the competitive edge for large markets and economies of scale.
- There is a lack of capital to invest, but strong willingness.

### **Thematic Cluster 3: “People, Culture and Diversity”**

For TC 3, the European Union should address the following themes:

#### *(a) Making the most out of Europeans*

One of the main points of the vision revolves around the notion that *the EU should make better use of her people*. This notion relies on the premise that there is a wealth of underused talent and experience in Europe. The idea of making the most out of the pool of existing talent is especially relevant in the light of demographic change in Europe. With fewer and fewer members of society joining the labour force, Europe needs to take advantage of whatever human capital is available. One of the first initiatives to achieve this aim is to ensure more effective, relevant and lifelong education. Learning should continue throughout the entire lifetime of individuals in order for them to incorporate new knowledge and innovative technology into their everyday lives, at work and at home. Meanwhile, greater mobility is needed across Europe. This includes workforce mobility, but also social and knowledge mobility.

*(b) Diversity as an opportunity*

The second point of TC3 consideration is to *promote diversity in Europe as an opportunity*. Diversity across Europe is a fact and a distinguishing feature from other trading blocks in the world (and is part of the Europe's *ethos*). Often it is taken as a disadvantage and as a risk, but this approach should be turned on its head. ICT can be used to overcome the difficulties of access to content and help promote diversity and pluralism. Many more outlets can be made available to users, who can choose freely between them and thus, access a broader and more diverse range of content supply.<sup>5</sup> ICT can also facilitate access to local content but further efforts are needed to make this possible. Public spending can be more focussed in the cultural sector (culture and tourism). A digital environment can be offered and publicly owned content can be made more readily available.

*(c) Services for all*

The third point is to *ensure accessible services for all*. Services should be simple to use, transparent and useful. They should also be trustworthy and secure yet respect privacy and avoid excessive surveillance<sup>6</sup>. They should inspire trust and confidence, and create value (e.g. via adaptation and translation).

*(d) Promoting the active role of government*

The final idea proposed by TC3 is slightly more conventional, and points to the fact that *governments should play a more active role* in developing the people, the culture and in embracing diversity. This applies to government at all levels, from local to EU level. One of the main reasons for this argument is that governments are already major players in the economy, spending 45% of GDP on average. Therefore, they already have a high leverage on the economy. Furthermore, they can influence through the implementation of social systems and regulation, and through the monitoring of activities.

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<sup>5</sup> See for a discussion on ICT and pluralism: Punie, Y. (2004) Convergence and divergence in the new media landscape, Presentation at Seminar on Threats to Pluralism - The need for measures at the European level, Organised by the European Parliament Committee on Citizens' Freedom and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs, Brussels, European Parliament, 19 February 2004. [ORA 64721]. See also Deliverables of the Mudia project: <http://fiste.jrc.es> or <http://mudia.ecdc.info/index.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Clements, B., Maghiros, I., Beslay, L., Centeno, C., Punie Y. & Rodriguez, C. (2003) Security and Privacy for the Citizen in the Post-September 11 Digital Age: A Prospective Overview. Report to the European Parliament Committee on Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE), IPTS-JRC, July 2003.[EUR 2083 EN]

## 5. A VISION FOR EUROPE 2010 AND BEYOND

The whole exercise was oriented to the objective of delivering a vision for Europe 2010 and beyond. To this end we tried to make contributions – SWOT, Delphi, Thematic Clusters and concurrent discussions – assemble around one general purpose: “Feeling European, Acting as a Global Player”.

Indeed, lessons learned and an objective appraisal of the SWOT conclusions show that unless we can fruitfully deepen a common understanding of what being European feels like, we will remain crippled in our capacities to act as effective global players. Throughout history the better we behaved as Europeans the more successful we turned out in the world.

This integrated aim, encompassing a vision for ICT 2010 in Europe, unfolds into three pillars, each of which interacts with each other. To that effect, and to realise the proposed vision, leading players or key stakeholders have been identified. *See slides 6 and 7 in Annex 2.*

Our vision explores further into alternative Information Society objectives under the strategic directions of the Lisbon Agenda. Following after the achievements of eEurope, we do believe that **there is a need for a new generation of specific ICT goals in order to drive any further actions forward.** As did the designated Commissioner for Information Society and Media, Mrs Viviane Reding, at the European Parliament on the 29<sup>th</sup> September 2004. Three main policy drivers were emphasised: innovation, inclusion and creativity. *See slide 8 in Annex 2.*

Hence, the Expert Section of the eEurope Advisory Group agreed to lay down the following set of comprehensive pillars specifically designed for the task of building Europe 2010 and beyond through ICT policies.

### *1<sup>st</sup> Pillar “Grassroot Change: Empowering People and Communities”*

We have been inspired by the Commission’s aims of each e-Europe initiative:

eEurope 2002	aimed at connecting people;
eEurope + (2003)	aimed at connecting people in the candidate Member States;
eEurope 2005	aimed at stimulating secure services, applications and content based on a widely available broadband infrastructure.

This first pillar has been benefiting from opportunities identified by the SWOT analysis, such as the demographic dimension of the EU changes epitomised by the increasing migrant flows and by the challenges derived from an ageing population, and also the making of a knowledge age which requires mature reflection and bold experimentation. EU universities (teachers, researchers, students<sup>7</sup>...) and local communities, including virtual groups, will be leading players as they lie at the source of Europe’s change agenda. They carry the responsibility of producing a difference in developing creativity and innovation in Europe by establishing a European community of education, training, cultural advancement, lifelong learning, and research. *See slide 9 in Annex 2.*

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<sup>7</sup> Jeremy Rifkin dedicated his last book on the European Dream to the Erasmus students.

## *2<sup>nd</sup> Pillar “Creative Diversity: Leading Hub of Business Networks”*

Diversity is the engine of creativity, innovation, growth and variety which could trigger additional wealth. This statement pays homage to the multi-cultural and multi-lingual sources in Europe as a formidable repository of potential assets, that can be tailored to the full enrichment of each other with our own differences.

Entrepreneurs, investors, and young people will be first amongst those who will contribute to the creation of this valuable diversity approach that could match the complex challenges posed by sophisticated markets and the demands for increasing customisation. This bold movement is the adequate response to overcome the shortcomings of a defensive diversity and its threats of short-term realism and fragmented markets.

Business opportunities will be decided in increasingly interconnected networks.

Europe’s internal diversity – her unique base of world spoken languages and of outreach cultures – is a potential lever of global business networks and of creative responses to the new trade challenges which remain in short supply of crafty multicultural skills. *See slide 10 in Annex 2.*

It comes without surprise that, along those very same lines, the Report from the High Level Group chaired by W. Kok<sup>8</sup> makes a strong recommendation for Europe to reap the full benefits of ICTs: *“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 ICTs in all parts of the economy.”*

## *3<sup>rd</sup> Pillar “Open Governance: Citizen-Centred Services”*

The opportunities are quite the same for this third pillar. In fact, the European Union has been reaping the benefits of a positive momentum for some remarkable policy achievements in the field of online public services.

Taking stock of a vast inventory of breakthroughs in the supply of e-Government services, the citizen dimension – and focus – now emerges at the heart of a strategic effort to realise new forms of open governance inspired by people-centred services.

This orientation demands a strong sense of commitment from the part of both politicians and civil servants, but also of non-profit organisations which can contribute to making people more e-Government aware and actively literate e-Citizens.

Being European, thinking European, acting European, is synonymous of embracing the centrality of people and addressing the essence of the human predicament as prime concerns in the provision of government services. *See slide 11 in Annex 2.*

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<sup>8</sup> *Facing the Challenge-The Lisbon strategy for growth and employment*, Report from the High Level Group chaired by Wim Kok, November 2004, p. 22.

### *ICT in our vision for 2010*

Our three pillars have also to address the dangers posed by impending threats: real and virtual threats arising from our unsafe and insecure world, and lower entry barriers to knowledge-intensive industries which could weaken the position of European industry, and the additional effects of the job migration and the off-shoring movement. *See slide 12 in Annex 2.*

That is why the Expert Section was summoned to complement its vision with some ICT priorities capable of addressing a fresh European vision of the future that lies ahead. To that effect, ICT can be split over two approaches (*see slide 13 in Annex 2*):

- ❖ The first approach is ICT as an **enabler**: this is setting the stage for Europe to remain a leader in key technology investments, and by maintaining the thrust to consolidate high-end infrastructural developments such as broadband coverage, spectrum allocation and interoperability.
- ❖ The second approach is in ICT **deployment**: this could be seen as fostering a new European generation of products and services where content is present in all fronts touching on creativity, networking and entrepreneurship. The migration to a predominantly client and market-orientation platform includes such challenges as platform leadership, standardisation, convergence, and DRM policies.

We are at a pivotal moment, one that Carlota Perez, at the Amsterdam Event in September 2004, qualified as the “turning point”, where **present decisions about ICT infrastructure will shape our future**. Insufficient ICT is a major competitive handicap. Therefore, there is a role for EU Governments to provide the best possible context for the economy to take full advantage of the potential of ICT paradigm, and to promote a broad consensus for bold and adequate ICT policies and regulation. The European Union needs to develop and foster a presence in growth sectors, and in content development. *See slides from 14 to 18 in Annex 2.*

## 6. CONCLUSION: FROM VISION TO REALITY WITH CONCRETE PROPOSALS

The core mandate of the Work Group was to deliver a strategic vision for the next five years and possibly looking beyond 2005. However, we cannot imagine a more appropriate conclusion than to propose a few initiatives to make our vision more concrete for policy makers to be able to align resources. The Thematic Clusters have indeed delivered some concrete proposals as follow, organised around the three main clusters built for this occasion: *See slides 19, 20 and 21 in Annex 2.*

### Thematic Cluster 1: “Governance, Citizenship and Cohesion”

Thematic Cluster 1 debated on the challenges that the EU is facing to achieve the Lisbon objectives in the areas of Governance, Citizenship and Social cohesion.

#### (a) Access and accessibility policies

- Continue pursuing coverage and access goals.
- EU Accessibility Act on procurement services covering connectivity and web design aspects (i.e. *a public body would not develop services that do not respect a set of specifications on accessibility, and would not purchase any product which does not respect them*).
- Further deploy Public Internet Access points (PIAP), meaning physical locations where communities can meet and debate, becoming a community resource through a bottom up approach. These PIAPs should be open to the use by private and public services. These would provide users with employment opportunities, could become a tool for developing democracy and democratic participation, and a means to empower civil communities.

#### (b) Skills and digital literacy policies

- Major skills-raising effort from school and university to life long learning
- Skills and digital literacy :
  - There is a need for an evolving definition, adaptable to different people, and different contexts (no one-size-fits-all concept).
  - There is a need to define targets: for example 100% of Europeans should be literate by 2010. A sub target illustrating digital literacy levels could be the level of take-up of on-line public service (i.e. 50%).
  - It is suggested to take an experimental approach, with mechanisms for best practice exchanges.

#### (c) Legal certainty policies

- Increase legal certainty by ensuring that on-line regulation is enforced and that there are tools for dispute resolution (as a means to increase trust).
- An ID management services *federation*.

#### (d) e-Government policies

- Use technology and the power of procurement (governments purchase for an amount equivalent to 45% of GDP) to make government and administration more transparent, accountable and participatory.
- Support of cross-border community networks, including migrants.
- Open-access European public historical and cultural archive.

## Thematic Cluster 2: “Growth, Innovation and Sustainability”

Content was raised by TC2 as the main ally of ICT in the coming years. Europe should invest in content development and use European diversity to target the world market. Among content, it is worth mentioning commercial content, free content, peer to peer content, content developed by communities of interest, public content (ensuring the availability of this kind of content) and "self-creative" content. A deliberate strategy to address these possibilities should overcome the dichotomy between industrial and free productions. Some of the drivers for content production could be health, entertainment, education (lifelong learning, training, open universities) and the sciences.

Some of the challenges ahead are the consideration of marketing as a key issue to sell content; the necessity to involve everybody, including older and disabled people; developing interfaces to make content broadly available (in language and format); and fostering new business models. Different networks and devices would speak to each other providing content. The future will lie in the heterogeneity of networks, an ecosystem of software including open source software, working in flexible ways with a diversity of devices. There is a need for semantic processing to let things work over different networks in different languages, and systems should be developed to look for media (as Google does on Internet).

According to TC2 view, the European Commission is handicapped without a strong industrial policy, though it is recognised that such a policy should not interfere with open competition on the market. The Commission also lacks standardisation possibilities which should be market-led and market-driven. However, the Commission could provide recommendations to standardisation with a view to broad distribution of content over different platforms, which ultimately is an issue for the market. The Commission could also play an important role in improving the financial structure to better support entrepreneurialism and SMEs, encouraging innovation, and networking and links with bigger companies. Carefully targeted measures in ensuring that SMEs are not unduly disadvantaged in participating in economic activities should be welcome.

ICT should not be considered isolated. ICT should be considered in the midst of other EU policies. Moreover, when some developments are successfully achieved in one application, they should move to other applications (example of electronic signatures in e-business and e-government). Synergy of application areas should be fostered. In order to achieve this, eEurope should be seen as something horizontal, and not only through vertical fields such as e-Health, e-Government, e-Business or e-Entertainment. Moreover, new business modelling for sustainable services should be encouraged. The benefits of such services particularly for citizens should be better explained and promoted.

Actions should be defined in five fields, namely *infrastructure, applications, content, business models and communities* per areas. Among actions to be taken, it is recommended to support the convergence of infrastructure and the development of interfaces as a support to the implementation of networks. Regarding applications, requirements for a sustainable development impose main consideration of the ageing workforce, and also of the diversity concept which should encompass mobility and flexibility within education, working, learning and other fields of life activity. A holistic and business-oriented view of interoperability should be encouraged. Diversity has to be translated in economical terms as competitive advantage, resulting in sustainable services. Communities and citizens, and of course customers, can achieve innovation when producing content (even from the distance).

Therefore multi-stakeholder partnerships for diversity-content development have to be supported, stimulating entrepreneurship, while taking advantage of the public content and the European centuries of history.

### **Thematic Cluster 3: “People, Culture and Diversity”**

Having outlined its perspectives for the future, the Thematic Cluster turned its attention to some concrete ICT proposals that could help realise this vision.

Firstly, a *forceful Public Services Action Plan* is required. It should include concrete proposals for strengthening e-Government, e-Health, and e-Learning. Also, the role of ICT in promoting culture and tourism needs to be explored and encouraged. Access for all should always be kept in mind and ensured, possibly by using the full range of interoperable platforms. Extra funding for this plan should come in part from the regional development funds (e.g. 10%). This is also symbolically important. It would give unequivocal signals that we are moving from an industrial society to a knowledge-driven society.

Secondly, a stronger emphasis is necessary on *content*. Cultural diversity and pluralism should be stimulated through ICT (especially broadband development). Access for all should be ensured, both on the supply and the demand sides, through EU directives. Specific initiatives are also needed, such as a European search engine, a Content Clearing House or an EU Cultural Portal. And finally, public sector information has to be made widely available at all levels through a diverse range of multi-modal ICT applications.<sup>9</sup>

Thirdly, *greater employability and mobility* need to be promoted. Social systems should be reformed, keeping the same level of social protection while allowing for much more mobility. ICT should be used to promote mobility at different levels (between cities, regions, countries) through applications such as e-Learning and tele-working. ICT should also facilitate mobility in terms of security and border control systems.

Finally, ICT has to be used to promote ‘*Europeanness*’ (i.e. to reinforce the European identity). It should facilitate access to information about other Member States and their cultures through translation tools such as subtitling. It could disseminate knowledge to regions and communities through the EU Cultural Portal and enhance connectivity between Europeans.

But, above all, ICT should be used to *reinforce our European identity* by highlighting those values which Europeans share and which other parts of the world admire. It is by comparing ourselves with others who are far different from us that we realise what we share in common. In the case of Europe, it is a set of values which defines who we are, what makes our way of life distinctive, and shapes our disposition to face the challenges of the next decade.

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<sup>9</sup> See for scenarios on the future of media industries: Punie, Y., Burgelman, J-C. & Bogdanowicz, M. (2002), ‘The future of online media industries. Scenarios for 2005 and beyond’, *The IPTS Report*, 64, May 2002, 35-42.

Our Next Society is the product of will and ingenuity of the present European generation to shape the future.

In doing so, and in addressing Europe's future challenges, one day we hope to be able to proclaim in one voice:

*“We, the people of Europe, we solemnly declare that we have a dream, that we behold a vision and that we are convinced that people are the prime factor in our relentless pursuit of peace, prosperity, meaning, beauty and happiness.”*

**It is now the responsibility of Member States and the European Commission to turn this hope into reality.**

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