

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(90) 570 final

Brussels, 23 January 1991

Proposal for a
COUNCIL DECISION

setting up a programme for an information services market

(presented by the Commission)

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

CORRIGENDUM

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Brussels, 30 January 1991

CONCERNE TOUTES LES VERSIONS.

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4. Financial implications

The indicative internal breakdown of the 100 Mio ECU for the programme implementation is given below:

	<u>Percentage</u>
1. Improving the understanding of the market	8 - 10
2. Overcoming legal and administrative barriers	7 - 9
3. Increasing user-friendliness and improving information literacy	33 - 35
4. Supporting strategic information initiatives	48 - 50

To this must be added around 125 million ECU in contribution from participants in cooperative projects, thus bringing the total cost of the programme to an estimated 225 million ECU.

The planned financing of the programme 1991-1995 is the following:

Item 5.500

<u>Year</u>	<u>Commitment appropriation in Mio ECU</u>	<u>Payment appropriation in Mio ECU</u>
1991	6	1
1992	16	18
1993	20	12
1994	25	17
1995	33	25
1996	-	18
1997	-	<u>9</u>
	TOTAL 100	TOTAL 100

Method of calculation

- a) Around 80 % for projects aimed at the objectives of the programme
- b) around 8 % for experts
- c) around 5 % for infrastructure (including the CEC host ECHO)
- d) around 7 % for publications, programme administration, meetings, workshops, etc.

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

1. This communication concerns the continuation of Community policy and actions on the creation of an internal information services market (IMPACT.2 programme).
2. It follows the implementation of the first two-year plan of action (IMPACT.1) adopted by the Council on 26 July 1988 (Decision EEC/88/524) with a budget of ECU 36 million. The objectives of this plan of action were to set up an internal information services market, to stimulate and reinforce the competitive capability of European suppliers of information services, to promote the use of advanced information services and to reinforce joint efforts to achieve Community cohesion with respect to information services policies.
3. The continuation of Community actions to establish an internal information services market is a matter of priority because of the strategic importance of information for research, industry and commerce, and the new requirements arising from the creation of the Single Market.
4. It is of vital importance for all sectors and all aspects of economic activity that modern information services using advanced computer and telecommunications technology should be available.
5. These services are particularly important from the point of view of the competitiveness and long-term viability of European manufacturing industry, which is increasingly dependent on its speed of reaction to the needs of the market, which in turn depends on the services which supply the technical and commercial information necessary for developing products.
6. These have become the essential component of major sectors of the services industry, such as banking, finance, transport, insurance and tourism.
7. Full information on the markets, regulations and trading partners is a sine qua non for cross-frontier commercial transactions. Developing professional electronic information services covering the whole of Europe is therefore an important

factor in the economic integration of the Community, the creation of the Single Market by 1992, and its subsequent consolidation.

8. The electronic supply of information has become a completely separate sector of economic activity. In 1988 world turnover in on-line database services, including real-time financial information, was of the order of ECU 7 thousand million. With the advent of new forms of disseminating information observers forecast a world market which will reach ECU 100 thousand million in all electronic information services between now and the year 2000.
9. However, despite the progress made in new information and telecommunications technologies, the development of a European market for electronic professional information services remains hampered by numerous technical, legal and linguistic barriers. Most such services have been developed within the Community on a mainly national basis and do not have much impact as a force for economic integration at Community level. In addition, because of the constraints of the economies of scale, their viability is in doubt in the face of competition of North American origin.
10. The experience gained in implementing the first plan of action showed that the Community had a vital rôle to play in guaranteeing the potential for growth in the European information services industry and the development of this market in Europe. However, in view of its preparatory nature, the restricted budget, and the duration of this plan of action, which was limited to two years, only a few of the operations necessary for creating an internal information services market could be tackled. These must be continued and completed over a longer period if they are to come to full fruition.
11. The proposed new programme covering a five-year period takes up the general objectives of the first plan of action and amends the lines of action and support mechanisms in the light of the experience gained and market developments.
12. The four lines of action proposed focus on improving the understanding of the market, overcoming legal and administrative barriers, increasing the user-friendliness of the services and improving information literacy, and supporting strategic information operations, the cost of which is to be shared with the public and private sectors.
13. The main alterations envisaged in the intervention mechanisms relate to simplifying the procedures for calls for proposals for shared-cost projects, and flexibility in Community support to allow increased participation by small and medium-sized enterprises, in particular those located in the less-favoured regions of the Community.
14. The amount required to implement the programme for five years is estimated at ECU 100 million. It is anticipated that this contribution from the Community will make it possible to attract ECU 125 million from the information services industry to cofinance shared-cost projects.

Draft programme for the continuation
of Community policy and actions for
setting up an internal information services market
(IMPACT 2)

INTRODUCTION

1. In view of the fundamental importance of information in the development of trade, industry and research, Council decided on 26 July 1988 to establish a plan of actions (EEC decision 88/524) aimed at :
 - a. setting up an internal information services market by the end of 1992,
 - b. stimulating and reinforcing the competitive capability of European suppliers of information services,
 - c. promoting the use of advanced information services,
 - d. reinforcing joint efforts to achieve Community cohesion with respect to information services policies.
2. Initial actions designed to achieve these objectives have been elaborated in consultation with the Senior Officials Advisory Committee for the Information Services Market (SOAC) and implemented for the years 1989-1990 (IMPACT 1). The strategic importance of information and new needs emerging from the creation of the internal market call for a continuation of the Community policy in the field beyond 1990. In view of the results achieved so far (1) and of the encouraging responses to this initiative from industry, users and Member States, the Commission proposes to sustain progress by extending the IMPACT 1 programme for a period of five years (IMPACT 2) from 1991 onwards.

(1) SEC (90) 1778 final, Evaluation report on the initial results of the IMPACT programme.

**IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION SERVICES FOR
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

3. On several occasions (2) the Commission has highlighted the importance of information services for economic and social development. The competitiveness and prosperity of the Community are highly dependent on the availability, quality and accessibility of relevant sources of information.
4. The volume of recorded information is increasing exponentially, and the availability of modern information services taking advantage of advanced technologies in data processing and communications are becoming of critical importance in all sectors and aspects of the Community's industrial, commercial, professional, administrative and social activities. It is particularly important for the competitiveness and long-term viability of European manufacturing industries, which more and more depend on speed of reaction to market needs, which in turn depends on services to provide information (technical and marketing) in support of product development.
5. In addition, large sectors of the service industries are becoming highly information-dependent, such as banking, finance, trade, insurance, transport and tourism. The Community's ability to remain in the forefront of such industries in world markets will increasingly depend on the availability of high-quality information services.
6. Appropriate information is a pre-requisite for commercial operations across borders. The development of electronic information services at European level can exert a major impact on the integration of the economy of the Community, the achievement of the single market by 1992 and its consolidation afterwards.
7. Individual citizens also need and are greatly affected by information services. Indeed, the information society will progressively change under the impact of new means of collecting and disseminating information. Equal access and free flow of information is a basic ingredient for the healthy functioning of Europe's democratic systems. Modern information services should allow easy access to information, provide the possibilities to select and process relevant information, in respect of the citizen's fundamental rights such as privacy protection, and thus constitute a basis for decision-making and for active participation in society.
8. The provision of information in electronic forms is becoming in its own right a major area of economic activity. In 1988, the worldwide turnover for online database and real-time information services accounted for around 7 billion ECU, with a share of around 2 billion ECU for Europe. With an average growth rate of more than 20 % per annum for online services and the emerging market for

(2) COM (85) 658 and COM (87) 360.

new forms of delivery of machine-readable information (e.g. CD-ROM), observers predict a world market of up to 100 billion ECU for the whole electronic information services industry by the year 2000.

CURRENT SITUATION AND EXPECTED DEVELOPMENTS

9. The current position of Europe in the world market for electronic information services is still significantly weaker than it ought to be. For example, the size in turnover of Europe's market for online information services (excluding videotext) is currently one third of the US market. In 1988, the European Community produced only half as many online databases as the United States. In addition, it has to be stated that the US develop many more higher value (e.g. factual or full-text) and larger (in volume) databases than Europe. For-profit organisations are the major actors in database production in the US, 83 % in 1988, whereas in Europe the non-profit sector predominates in the production of online databases, 52 % in 1988.
10. By nature, the information market is highly segmented by subject, type of users, means of delivery. For instance, the market for real-time financial information services has no connection with the market for credit rating even though both of them concern the financial and banking sector. In addition, the European information market is fragmented by differences in languages, standards and regulations.
11. The expected free movement of goods, services, capital and persons in the context of the establishment of the Single European Market will be an important step towards achieving economies of scale as it will boost user demand for Community-wide information services.
12. However, European information providers are not presently in a position to grasp this opportunity without strong policy support from the Community.
13. A large number of different actors are operating in the European market, most of them of small size and often more orientated towards their respective national markets than to the European or world-wide market. Accustomed to developing their markets along largely national or linguistic lines, they lack the skills and resources required to develop a truly pan-European market. The few big actors of European origin who have the potential to operate across borders seem more prepared to invest in the US market than in Europe. In contrast, there is now significant American interest in acquisitions in all information and media fields throughout the Community in order to capitalise upon the Single Market opportunity.
14. Moreover, new challenges are facing the European information services industry with the changing regulatory environment in telecommunications services, progress in optical storage technology and the emergence of Japan as a

potential competitor in the provision of advanced information services (3).

15. It is therefore of critical importance that, in addition to its current efforts to remove barriers to the creation of an internal market for information services, the Community continues to provide a framework to foster cooperation between information providers from various Member States that would strengthen the European information services industry. Pilot and demonstration projects as launched in the framework of IMPACT 1 are one of the means to achieve such an aim. Other mechanisms should be considered in cooperation with the industry.
16. Another aspect of the market fragmentation is the different level of provision and use of advanced information services within the Community. This disparity is evident in the fact that one Member State was producing in 1988 about one third of all databases within the Community, which accounted for 74 % of all EC database exports to the USA. There are other Member States where only very few electronic information services are produced. The different speeds of progress bear a high risk for the internal cohesion of the Community and are a factor of distortion in the working of the internal market. Administrations as well as the information industries of less-favoured regions have urged the Commission to take appropriate measures and to define specific actions to avoid a further increase of the discrepancies and to reduce disparities where possible.

**PROPOSED ORIENTATIONS FOR THE CONTINUATION
OF THE IMPACT PROGRAMME**

17. The start-up phase of IMPACT 1 has already borne fruit. The Information Market Observatory has helped to obtain a much better understanding of the electronic information services market, its size, structure and functions.
18. The Legal Advisory Board has succeeded in being considered as an authority in that its work and findings have influenced Member States' jurisprudence and concepts for emerging legislation. The publication of the Guidelines for a better synergy between the public and the private sectors in the information market has been welcomed both by Industry and Public Administrations as a major step towards the reduction of market uncertainties concerning the role of the public sector as a user and provider of information.
19. The multilingual user support actions by means of the European Commission Host Organisation (ECHO) constitute a considerable help to guide the user through the information jungle and to create awareness of innovative information products and services.

(3) SEC (90) 1778 final, Information Market Observatory report on major changes in the Information Market.

20. A plan of actions for libraries in the European Community has been prepared, which, after approval by Council, will work towards the more efficient exchange of information between libraries and improve the conditions for the application of new information technologies in this sector.
21. The response by the market to the calls for proposals for pilot and demonstration projects has demonstrated that it was possible to mobilise over 700 organisations on cooperative Community projects, but at the same time that the level of funds available for this purpose was insufficient. Despite the high quality of the proposals received up to now in six out of fifteen priority areas, only about one out of ten proposals could be supported by the Community with an average of 25-35 % co-financing.
22. The results achieved so far demonstrate that the Community has a critically important role to play for the growth potential of the European information services industry and for the further development of the market in Europe. However, because of the rather limited budget and the short time span on IMPACT 1 certain initiatives could only be started, and will need continuation to realise their full potential. The general objectives of IMPACT 1 and most of the more detailed aims remain the same for the new IMPACT 2 programme. However, the experience gained and the changes which have occurred in the information market call for a certain reorientation of the focus of Community initiatives. The common goal of the various action lines of IMPACT 2 shall be to integrate this market at Community level by removing technical barriers, reducing regional disparities in the level of supply and use of modern information services, and by encouraging European cooperation between information providers. This overall goal could be achieved within a period of five years, provided that Community efforts are sustained without disruptions with an adequate level of funding.
23. This new orientation has been discussed with over 1.000 participants (users, information providers, Member States officials) in the information market in the course of an intensive round of consultations which took place in each Member State.

SETTING UP AN INTERNAL INFORMATION SERVICES MARKET

24. Efforts to improve information market conditions will become a primary objective for IMPACT 2. Only by lowering the barriers that fragment the Community information market can a single market be created which will offer the information industry the economies of scale it needs to compete equitably in world markets. One of the first priorities of IMPACT 2 will therefore be the improvement of the information market infrastructure by the reduction of uncertainties and barriers which hamper the growth of the market.

25. The conclusions of the evaluation of IMPACT.1 advocate the need to continue and expand the activities of the Information Market Observatory (IMO) and to improve the dissemination of the results of its investigations. The collection and dissemination of information related to the database service market will continue and be extended to neighbouring publishing markets. Additional efforts will be put into developing the insights into the nature, structure, behaviour and performance of the information market and industry which are the essential foundation for rational and effective policy-making and action, and into conceptual and prognostic studies in support of this. Moreover, a much more active interest will be given to developments in information science and information economy. The IMO will seek to improve the dissemination of the results of its analysis to users and industry through dissemination agreements with trade associations and specialised publishers.
26. The investigations of the Legal Advisory Board (LAB) have revealed that many of the legal issues which affect the development of the information services market (such as intellectual property, data privacy, liability, authentication of electronic signatures) have implications which extend beyond the scope of the IMPACT programme to many other programmes. There must be greater coordination of the legal work in sectoral programmes relating to the impact of new information technologies in order to avoid too restricted approaches and duplication of efforts. For this purpose the expertise and documentation resources of the LAB secretariat will be strengthened and LAB expertise will be drawn, where appropriate, to assist the Commission in preparing legal initiatives relating to the new information technologies as part of sectoral programmes (such as the TEDIS programme on Electronic Data Interchange and the plan of actions for libraries in the EC). In addition, the close cooperation established with the Council of Europe and the OECD will be continued and increased.
27. In addition to ongoing work on horizontal legal issues, initiatives specifically related to certain segments of the information services market will be developed by the Commission. It will investigate legal issues arising from the guidelines aimed at increasing synergy between the public and private sectors and prepare appropriate proposals for the harmonization of rules relating to the marketing of certain data registers. It will encourage the drawing up of European codes of conduct and monitor the application of data privacy principles in relation to the provision of electronic information services. Community guidelines will be drawn-up to provide a framework for contractual arrangements between the market operators in areas such as editorial liability, maintenance of service quality, confidentiality, database usage and publishers' rights.
28. The composition of the LAB will be reviewed by the Commission in order to secure active participation of

market actors (information providers and users) and public authorities involved in addition to the independent legal experts from the fields to be examined. An active dissemination policy of the results of LAB's work will be undertaken in cooperation with specialised publishers.

29. Standards and norms in information handling and structuring will receive more emphasis in IMPACT 2. There is, in particular, a pressing need for the adoption of common standards for the format and structure of information of all kinds, particularly on published media, and also at the interfaces between systems. The primary emphasis must be on the promotion and application of existing standards such as SGML, ODA and graphic interface formats. The further promotion of application and use of standards in this way will be positively encouraged through demonstration projects and direct support to the preparation of inter-industry agreements.

STIMULATING AND REINFORCING THE COMPETITIVE CAPABILITY OF EUROPEAN SUPPLIERS OF INFORMATION SERVICES

30. There is a significant danger to be taken into consideration. An improved market infrastructure will provide an effective vehicle for the delivery of information services from all sources. If nothing were done to improve the quality of services provided by the Community information services industry, then the creation of the internal market for information services would merely provide a better means of access to external (non-European) services. This would put the Community information industry in a worse position than it is at present.
31. Pilot and demonstration projects launched in the framework of IMPACT 1 have appeared to be an effective means to mobilize the industry and to stimulate the development of transborder cooperation agreements within the Community. Such actions that stimulate cooperation between the various actors of the industry need to be pursued and strengthened. However, as shown by the evaluation report of IMPACT.1, procedures for the launch of pilot and demonstration projects need to be shortened. In addition, experience has demonstrated the need to review support mechanisms in the light of the specific aims of the various actions lines. Calls for proposals will be used to encourage the launch of Community projects which can exert a catalytic effect on the development of the market in specific priority areas, as well as, in other activities (for instance market investigations of the IMO) where it is possible to share costs with other organizations. In addition to current levels of support special add on incentives will be considered to encourage a more active participation of small undertakings and less favoured regions. Time flexible funding is needed in certain action lines where there is a need for Community stimulus, not necessarily related to specific projects, such as the transfer of know how to LFRs and the promotion of European partnership to improve the

quality and accessibility of existing information services. New support mechanisms, based on the experience of Member States, will be experimented for this purpose.

32. The Community should supply nothing which could be supplied just as well and just as quickly without help; nor should it provide cash support when all that is needed is impetus to get things moving. However, the information services industry is mainly made up of small enterprises which do not always have the resources available to establish projects involving international cooperation and which need assistance for the identification of potential financial partners. A specific scheme will be implemented to provide support to SMEs for the setting up of European partnerships which would allow the implementation of their projects without further Community support. In order to be effective such a scheme will² require a simplification of current calls for proposals procedures and allow for differentiated funding of proposals for projects.
33. The industry response to the calls for proposals for pilot and demonstrations projects launched in the initial phase of INPACT 1 demonstrates the need for support to the development of applications which are currently not economically viable but which could become so with stimulation. Such projects are regarded as particularly appropriate where the initial development investment is not readily forthcoming from commercial sources.
34. There exist also information needs of major importance (e.g. for Science, Education, Culture and Environmental Protection) which cannot be satisfied by market forces alone because of the lack of prospects for commercial viability of information products in the field within a reasonable time span. Such information services of strategic importance are currently provided at national level by non-profit, public or private organisations. In certain cases, the cost of providing such services will be lowered and their quality improved through European cooperation (e.g. exchange of data and experience).
35. Although INPACT 2 should remain primarily market-driven, it is desirable that the Community provide a framework for supporting the start-up phase of cooperative projects from the non-profit sector which would provide benefits to the user community as a whole, comply with the guidelines for improving the synergy between the public and private sectors and prepare the ground for new openings of the market.
36. The information services industry is quite heterogeneous; it embraces all organisations and individuals which participate in the electronic information chain, which encompasses the collection, processing, dissemination and use of information. It thus encompasses publishers, specialised press, database publishers, host services, gateway operators, information brokers, intermediaries, in major production, research and service industries. A

variety of associations represent the diversity of the industry. It is desirable to encourage cooperation between these associations on shared-cost projects that will support current activities directly undertaken by public authorities at national and EEC levels. Such collaboration will allow co-financing, by associations and representatives of both information users and industry, of activities of common interest.

PROMOTING THE USE OF ADVANCED INFORMATION SERVICES

37. The priority given to intelligent interfaces in the framework of IMPACT 1 was a preliminary attempt to encourage developments that would simplify user access to existing information services. In this context, it will be particularly important to bridge the gap between research work (e.g. under ESPRIT) for the development of more intelligent human-computer interfaces and their incorporation into commercial systems.
38. The development of gateways and the promotion of interworking between hosts is also a means to overcome the fragmentation of the European market. However, the findings of the Information Market Observatory show that most of the gateway and other interworking agreements which are spontaneously taking place in the marketplace are domestic. Building upon the results of initial pilot projects and on Member States' experience, it will be desirable to promote more actively the development of trans-European interworking. The "kiosk" concept has proved to be a successful technical and commercial means of facilitating end-user access to a wide variety of dispersed videotex services. Within IMPACT 2 an umbrella project for testing the viability of European business kiosk facilities that will provide SMEs with easy access to professional audiotex, videotex and ASCII information services will be developed.
39. Attention will be given to the growing need for user-friendly multi-mode access and presentation of information incorporating text, graphics, images and voice, and for a uniform, integrated treatment of information which may be delivered through off-line products, transmitted by telecommunications, or added locally.
40. The diversity of languages hampers easy access to information resources available within the Community. European information providers will be encouraged to provide services in the native language of their users. But overcoming language barriers is costly because in addition to translation costs it requires most often international partnership in order to provide local support to users in their own languages. Community support for the setting-up of partnerships and for pilot applications of the use of existing multilingual tools is justified in order to alleviate the burden of this extra cost.

41. Lack of awareness of the value of information, and of available services and how they can be used, is a major barrier to the growth of the market. The efforts initiated by the Commission for increasing awareness should be strengthened.
42. Up to now, most of the actions in this area have been carried out in the framework of ECHO activities. More emphasis will now be given to the dissemination of the experience gained by ECHO and to collaboration with national organisations which will act as a relay and multiply the effect of general awareness activities promoted by the Community.
43. ECHO provides a number of facilities which benefit the information services community as a whole, such as a European help desk and electronic directories on information services available in Europe, low cost training and demonstration facilities for users who are not yet subscribers to electronic information services. In addition, ECHO is a test bed for innovative experiments.
44. New initiatives will be launched to promote information literacy throughout the Community. The call for proposals mechanisms could be used to provide support to organisations which promote awareness on Community information resources and in particular to universities in order to encourage them to accustom their students to the use of modern information services.

**REINFORCING JOINT EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE COMMUNITY
COHESION WITH RESPECT TO INFORMATION SERVICES POLICIES**

45. The different speeds of development of electronic information services within Europe threaten the cohesion of the Community. The objective of creating the internal market for information services will not be achieved as long as a market of reduced dimensions exists in certain regions. In less favoured regions, the market for electronic information services is so underdeveloped that very few actors can effectively benefit from the Community Information Market Policy. It is a matter of concern that under current financial mechanisms and selection criteria for projects, actions undertaken by the Community to stimulate further the development of the market lead in effect to further increases in the gap between the less favoured regions of the Community and the most advanced countries. Little progress will be made without national initiatives to promote this aim. IMPACT 2 will be supportive of such initiatives and provide appropriate incentives to encourage their development.
46. Specific efforts will be devoted to training actions, the aim being to train professional information officers and support the creation of centres of excellence who could relay later on the Community efforts.

47. Incentives will be provided for the setting up of joint ventures and cooperation which will enable transfer of know-how and experience from the more advanced countries to the less favoured regions of the Community.
48. Specific stimulation programmes directly tailored to the needs of LFRs will be launched with a view to testing various funding mechanisms (e.g., umbrella projects cofunded by local authorities and regional financial instrument) and to identifying the most effective schemes that could be repeated in other countries. In order to increase the use of financial regional instruments to improve information infrastructures, additional initiatives will be proposed, in association with the Member States.
49. SMEs play an important role in the European economy, even more so in LFRs. They have difficulties in establishing partnerships with their counterparts in other Member States. It is therefore desirable to set up a mechanism that will provide support to SMEs for pre-development studies, the start-up of cooperation with partners in other Member States and the preparation for attracting other sources of funding. The particular requirements of SMEs in LFRs will be taken into account by specific action and funding mechanisms.

CONCLUSION

50. IMPACT 1 has generated a better understanding of the nature of the European information market, and further momentum in the stimulation and promotion of that market. This momentum need to be sustained and enhanced by a new programme over a five-year period.
51. IMPACT 2 will respond flexibly to the emerging needs of the changing market, and will work at a strategic level to ensure that the market for information services is nurtured and developed in the best interests of the whole Community, with a particular focus on cohesion requirements and wherever possible working in partnership with industry.

Proposal for a
COUNCIL DECISION

setting up a programme for an information services market

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community,
and in particular Article 235 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission (1),

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament (2),

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee (3),

Whereas, by virtue of the economic importance of information, the creation
of an internal information services market occupies an essential place in
the consolidation and strengthening of the internal market after 1992;

Whereas the initial results of the plan of actions for setting up an
information services market in Europe adopted by the Council by Decision
88/524/EEC (4), indicate that a much broader programme is necessary [(5)];

(1) OJ No

(2) OJ No

(3) OJ No

(4) OJ No L 288/39, 21.10.1988.

[(5) SEC(90) 1778 final].

Whereas there exist numerous legal, administrative, fiscal and other technical barriers to the development of an internal information market which are hindering the setting up of new services causing, in some cases, distortions of competition;

Whereas the future development of information resources and information-based services requires the application of new technologies and the achievement of economies of scale;

Whereas the Community has a competitive position which is strong in some sectors of the information market but which needs to be strengthened in others;

Whereas the need for simplification of procedures, as well as harmonization, in the field of database access should undergo priority scrutiny;

Whereas the needs and legitimate demands of users of information services, and particularly of those in small and medium-sized enterprises and in the less-favoured regions of the Community, merit special attention;

Whereas the different rates of development in the provision and use of information services in the Member States merit special attention with the view of strengthening the internal cohesion of the Community and the working of the internal market;

Whereas the growing importance of information in international transactions, and of the related problems concerning services, is receiving increasing attention in international fora and this fact serves to emphasise the necessity for Member States to develop common positions in those fora;

Whereas the Community's financial engineering mechanisms may contribute to the implementation of the present plan of action, in particular with regard to strategic or other pilot and demonstration projects;

Whereas that part of the amount deemed necessary which is intended to finance pilot and demonstration projects may be used, in particular, to attract any necessary additional sources of funding from the partners concerned, thereby having a multiplier effect on the development of the European information services market;

Whereas any information market policy must be complementary to other Community initiatives, notably in the fields of telecommunications;

Whereas the Treaty has not provided the necessary powers to this end, other than those of Article 235,

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

A programme is hereby set up with the following objectives:

1. to establish an internal market for information services;
2. to stimulate and reinforce the competitive capability of European suppliers of information services;
3. to promote the use of advanced information services;
4. to reinforce joint efforts to achieve Community cohesion with respect to information service policies.

Article 2

In order to attain the objectives referred to in Article 1, the following actions shall be undertaken under the responsibility of the Commission, in accordance with Annex I:

1. Improving the understanding of the market;
2. Overcoming legal and administrative barriers;

3. Increasing user-friendliness and improving information literacy;
4. Supporting strategic information initiatives.

None of the actions shall duplicate the work carried out in these areas under Community or national programmes.

Article 3

The programme shall cover a period of five years.

Article 4

At the midterm and at the end of the programme, the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament and to the Council evaluation reports on the results obtained through the implementation of the actions and may present, on the basis of those results, proposals for adjustment in the orientation of the programme.

Article 5

1. The Commission is hereby authorized to negotiate agreements with third countries taking part in the development of the information services market with a view to associating them wholly or partially with the programme. These agreements shall be based on the criteria of mutual advantage.
2. Before entering into the negotiations referred to in paragraph 1, the Commission shall inform the Council of its intentions to negotiate and of the terms of reference of these negotiations.

Article 6

This Decision shall take effect on

Done at Brussels,

For the Council

Annex I

ACTION LINES OF IMPACT 2

Action Line 1 : Improving the understanding of the market

- 1.1 The European Information Market Observatory (IMO) will continue and extend the scope of its activities for the identification of the European Community's competitive strengths and weaknesses in the sector in order to keep Community Institutions and Member States informed in drawing up their policy. During the initial phase of IMPACT the IMO focussed its investigations on the supply of database services. It will enlarge the scope of its investigations to neighbouring publishing markets with particular attention to the market for business and trade press and scientific, technical and medical publishing. The IMO will give greater focus to user surveys, in order to gain better knowledge of the means by which users get access to the professional information they need and identify gaps which require Community initiatives.
- 1.2 The IMO will keep a permanent inventory of existing market data sources. It will primarily rely on these sources to purchase the data it needs for its investigations. It will launch or stimulate additional surveys when the data required are not available, incomplete or unreliable. It will also carry-out sectoral investigations in order to identify those sectors of the information market which are inadequately served or slowly progressing although they are of strategic importance for the Community. Following the initial methodological workshop organised in 1989 in cooperation with Eurostat, the IMO will support the long term methodological efforts required for the creation of a conceptual framework that will allow the inclusion of the information services sector in official statistics. In addition, the IMO will encourage further work in information sciences and economics of information to stimulate the development of models and forecasting tools which are required for the prognosis of information market trends and the assessment of their impact on the rest of the economy.
- 1.3 The intention of the IMO is to supplement the efforts of Member States companies and other organisations interested in the development of the market. The activities of the IMO will therefore be undertaken in conjunction with and not supplant, the efforts of Member States, private sector companies and other organisations. The IMO will strengthen its network of national correspondents and improve links with existing

European and national associations in the information market. It will cooperate with these associations and relevant research organisations on shared-cost projects. In order to improve its documentation on the world market for information services, the IMO will seek to exchange on information with appropriate non Community organisations such as the Japan Database Promotion Center and the American Information Industry Association.

- 1.4 The results of the IMO analysis will be widely disseminated to users and industry through dissemination agreements with representative associations and specialised publishers. Each year, the IMO will prepare a report to Council and Parliament on the main changes which have occurred on the information market.

Action Line 2 : Overcoming Legal and Administrative Barriers

- 2.1 The actions which will be undertaken within the framework of IMPACT 2 will contribute to strengthening the synergy of work being carried out on legal problems of a horizontal nature (e.g. protection of privacy, responsibility, intellectual property, proof and authentication of electronic signatures) and to proposing Community initiatives specific to certain segments of the information services market.
- 2.2 The first category of work will contribute to the improvement of the coordination of sectoral initiatives on legal problems of a horizontal nature being undertaken within the framework of different programmes. With this in view, the Commission will reinforce the expertise and documentary resources it has acquired with the help of the Legal Advisory Board (LAB) in order to provide Member States and Community institutions with easier access to reference documents and to information on current work in the area. To this effect, the Commission will examine the possibility of encouraging the development of a specialised database. It will seek the expertise of LAB in preparing legal initiatives linked to new technologies. In parallel, it will continue and strengthen its cooperation with the Council of Europe and OECD in areas of common interest.
- 2.3 The second category of work will concentrate on the contribution to the preparation of initiatives specific to certain segments of the information market. The Commission will examine the legal problems raised by the implementation of the guidelines designed to strengthen the synergy between the public sector and the private sector in the information market; it will draw up proposals for harmonising the rules on the marketing of data files held by public and quasi-public bodies. It will encourage the drawing up of European codes of conduct and monitor the application of data privacy

protection in relation to the marketing of certain database services, such as mailing lists and databanks on credit and solvency, it will draw up Community guidelines to harmonise the conditions for opening up electronic information services to the public and to provide the framework for contractual arrangements between the various market actors in areas such as editorial liability, service quality control, confidentiality, database usage and, in particular, publishers' rights.

- 2.4 The composition of LAB will be modified by the Commission so as to make better provision for the participation in its work of public authorities and of relevant market actors as a complement to the participation of independent legal experts specialised in the various topics for examination.
- 2.5 The Commission will implement an active policy of disseminating the results of LAB's work, in conjunction with specialised publishers, in order better to inform the actors of their rights and obligations.

Action Line 3 : Increasing User-friendliness and Improving Information Literacy

- 3.1 In complement to current efforts for Open Systems Interconnection (OSI) the Commission will promote the development of open information interchange standards in cooperation with existing standardisation structures such as EWOS, ETSI and CEN/CENELEC. The demonstration and efficient application of information standards or industry norms for the encoding and structuring of information will be supported. Incentives will be provided to the acting parties to complete and extend existing information standards. The Commission will support demonstration projects to promote the application of information standards and to demonstrate their benefits. This will include in particular standards like the Standardised General Markup Language (SGML) and Office Document Architecture (ODA). The use of information standards in public sector information products will be promoted.
- 3.2 The development of generic interfaces providing flexible and economic solutions to access a large spectrum of information services will be encouraged. This will cover multimedia and European-wide access. The integration of multilingual facilities or icons and graphics in information services, the development of controlled vocabulary and natural language retrieval methods will be supported to facilitate access by untrained users. Incentives to extend existing natural language interfaces to other Community languages will be provided to support the Community's cohesion. Efforts will be undertaken to encourage the application of research results in areas such as experts systems, human-computer interface and natural language

processing, in information services. An umbrella project for testing the viability of European business KIOSK facilities that will provide SMEs with easy access to professional audiotex, videotex and ASCII information services will be developed. Integrated application of different types of information using sound, graphics, text and images will be stimulated.

- 3.3 To promote information literacy among professional people, the Commission will rely primarily on multipliers in the information services market and on certain groups of end-users. These multipliers include educational institutions, professional associations, national focal points, gateway operators and the specialised press.

Actions aimed at supporting the multipliers, experts and end users will comprise : development of appropriate tools, such as documentation, multi-media shows, videos, in all Community languages; organisation of conferences, seminars, workshops, information days, press conferences; participation in exhibitions; maintenance of existing directories and extension by new information products; publication of a regular newsletter giving information on Community initiatives; presence in information distribution networks of database inventories etc.; providing of a central help desk for users of information services, including a free phone enquiry service; operation of the multilingual host service ECHO (European Commission Host Organisation) which will continue to especially support new users of electronic information services and will act as an instrument for transferring know-how to the market place in accordance with the guidelines for the improvement of the synergy between the public and the private sectors in the information market.

- 3.4 Training actions will address all kinds of information handlers within the information chain covering : database production, host service operation, multimedia dissemination of information and use of information. Support will be given to training intermediaries and professionals in the use of electronic information both on-line and off-line, with special attention being given to Less Favoured Regions. Actions will also include training of future trainers in different regions, economic sectors and companies. Close collaboration with national and local authorities and other programmes (e.g. STAR, DELTA) will be sought.

Action Line 4 : Supporting Strategic Information Initiatives

- 4.1 The provisions of electronic scientific and technical information services (STI) - a basic resource for the European research community and for industrial progress - will be stimulated and strengthened. The Commission will build on recent initiatives in the areas of biotechnology information and engineering materials

data systems by creating a European cooperative network for biotechnology information and the further development of material data services. These initiatives will aim at improving the availability, quality and accessibility of European STI services through the creation of appropriate tools and structures which will foster the integration of existing systems and services and a more efficient sharing of resources.

- 4.2 Information services development in strategically important market sectors will be stimulated and facilities for cooperation will be made available. Where necessary the creation of embryonic structures will be supported. In particular information services which are relevant to Community policies or internal market operations will be stimulated. Harmonisation efforts will be undertaken in new sectors in which spontaneous, but uncoordinated developments take place, in order to stimulate cooperation and networking. The areas of patent information, information on standards, tourism and transport information, cultural information, environment and health information, and the standardised production of digitised basic geographical maps have been identified as sectors for Community action.
- 4.3 The strategic information projects may be extended and/or reviewed in the course of programme implementation on the basis of requirements identified by the IMO, of the results obtained at the mid-term review of this programme, and following close consultation with the information industry and the programme's advisory body. The priority areas which had been identified for pilot/demonstration projects under the previous IMPACT programme, but not yet developed so far, will be reviewed and action undertaken, if market needs are confirmed.
- 4.4 Commercial ventures for the development of information products and services on the basis of European partnership, e.g. Groupement Européen d'Intérêt Economique (GEIE), will be stimulated by reducing the financial burden involved in international cooperation. This will be applied in particular to small and medium-sized enterprises (SME). A support scheme will be provided for the preparation of international projects, for joint ventures agreed by partners from different Member States and for the transfer of know-how from advanced to less favoured regions of the Community. Closer cooperation between European and national trade or professional organisations will be supported, as well as the involvement of national focal points in order to promote strategic projects and the creation of an internal market for information.
- 4.5 The Commission will explore the possible linking of relevant organisations in the Member States into a networked media laboratory to develop a European expertise in information product prototype development for multimedia information services products, for promoting the exchange of experience and the transfer of

know-how, and for achieving synergy between publishers and system suppliers.

- 4.6 The taking off of the information market in less favoured regions depends on strategic information projects with catalytic effects. Adequate national/regional initiatives will be encouraged through Community support to projects with multiplier effect and elements of reproducibility in other geographical areas.
- 4.7 Shared cost projects will be one of the main instruments of the Commission to boost the strategic information initiatives. In some market sectors pilot and demonstration projects will be required to demonstrate new developments on a sufficiently wide scale and to achieve a catalytic effect on the development of European information services which otherwise would remain inadequate in size, coverage and scope. These projects will be defined in collaboration with users and/or industry.

Annex II

INDICATIVE INTERNAL BREAKDOWN OF APPROPRIATIONS

	Percentage
1. Improving the understanding of the market	8 - 10
2. Overcoming legal and administrative barriers	7 - 9
3. Increasing user friendliness and improving information literacy	33 - 35
4. Supporting strategic information initiatives	48 - 50

Annex III

MODALITIES FOR PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

1. The Commission will implement the programme in accordance with the technical content specified in Annex I.
2. The modalities for programme implementation will reflect the experience obtained with the implementation modalities of the previous IMPACT-programme and taking into account the results of the Evaluation Report. This suggests an increased number of shared cost projects for horizontal activities, in particular with regard to investigations carried out by the IMO, and streamlining of procedures with regard to the implementation of vertical actions to better respond to the constraints and interests of all kinds of market actors, and to increase and facilitate their participation in the programme.
3. The modalities will comply with the Commission's administrative procedures, and with the criteria of maximum impact and efficiency, equality and objectivity. They will be designed not to distort competition and will be adapted to the specific aims of the various action lines of the programme.
4. The project participants must be physical or legal persons established in the Community, or associations thereof, in particular European Economic Interest Groups (EEIG).

Physical or legal persons from countries which have concluded agreements providing for cooperation in this programme can, on the basis of the criterion of mutual benefit, participate in projects in the framework of the present programme. These partners shall not benefit from the financial contribution of the Community. They will contribute to the general administrative cost.

5. The selection of pilot and demonstration projects will normally be based on the normal call for proposals procedure which is published in the Official Journal of the European Communities. The procedures for the implementation of the calls for proposals will be tailored to each area and the specific subject needs. The objectives will be defined by workplans developed in close consultation with the market actors and the programme's Committee.

The main criteria in supporting projects through calls for proposals will be the impact in expanding the market without distorting it. Special add-on incentives will be provided to encourage participation of SMEs and less favoured regions, as well as for the transfer of know-how.

6. The Commission might also implement a more flexible funding scheme than the call for proposals in order to provide incentives for the creation of European partnerships, in particularly involving SMEs and organisations in LFRs, or for other exploratory activities in different segments of the information market. This scheme might be operated on a continuous basis.
7. The Commission will make provisions to consider in exceptional cases unsolicited project proposals which provide for a particularly promising and significant information market development, a new highly innovative approach, an exceptional technology or methodology, and which cannot be submitted within the normal call for proposals procedure. The objective of avoiding market distortion will be maintained.
8. The modalities for the two latter procedures will be implemented in consultation with the programme's Committee and in accordance with the Commission's financial regulations. They will be published each year in the Official Journal.
9. Projects fully financed by the Commission within the framework of study and service contracts will be implemented through calls for tenders in accordance with the Commission's financial regulations. Transparency will be achieved by publishing and circulating regularly the work programme to trade associations and other bodies.
10. For the implementation of the programme the Commission will also undertake activities designed to achieve the general objectives of the programme and the specific ones of each action line. Such activities will include workshops, seminars, conferences, studies, awareness campaigns, training courses, support schemes for joint ventures, assistance to national focal points and specific support for the LFR's information market development.

**Draft programme for the continuation of a Community
policy and actions for setting up an
internal information services market (IMPACT 2)**

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

1. Budget item concerned : Item 5.500

2. Legal basis

Article 235 of the EEC Treaty and Council Decision of 26.7.1988 (O.J. L 288/39 of 21.10.1988) concerning the establishment of a plan of action for setting up an information services market.

3. Objectives, expected results and justification

3.1 Objectives

The objectives of the programme are to set up an internal market for information services, to stimulate and reinforce the competitive capability of European suppliers of information services, to promote the use of advanced information services and to reinforce joint efforts to achieve Community cohesion with respect to information services policies.

The programme consists of four action lines: improving the understanding of the market; overcoming legal and administrative barriers; increasing user-friendliness and improving information literacy; supporting strategic information initiatives. There will be a mid-term and a final evaluation by independent experts. The various lines will have different contractual and financial schemes.

3.2 Justification

In addition to the objectives described under 3.1, there are two further main goals. Firstly to guarantee to the European industry, research and trade the availability, quality and accessibility of relevant sources of information in order to stay competitive on a world level. Secondly to help the European electronic information services industry to obtain a fair share of the emerging 100 billion ECU market with around 2 million new high-quality jobs, which are predicted for the year 2000.

4. Financial implications

The indicative internal breakdown of the 100 Mio ECU for the programme implementation is given below:

	<u>Percentage</u>
1. Improving the understanding of the market	8 - 10
2. Overcoming legal and administrative barriers	7 - 9
3. Increasing user-friendliness and improving information literacy	33 - 35
4. Supporting strategic information initiatives	48 - 50

To this must be added around 125 million ECU in contribution from participants in cooperative projects, thus bringing the total cost of the programme to an estimated 225 million ECU.

The planned financing of the programme 1991-1995 is the following:

Item 5.500

<u>Year</u>	<u>Commitment appropriation in Mio ECU</u>	<u>Payment appropriation in Mio ECU</u>
1991	6	1
1992	16	18
1993	20	12
1994	25	17
1995	33	25
1996	-	18
1997	-	<u>9</u>
	TOTAL 100	TOTAL 100

Method of calculation

- a) Around 80 % for projects aimed at the objectives of the programme
- b) around 8 % for experts
- c) around 5 % for infrastructure (including the CEC host ECHO)
- d) around 7 % for publications, programme administration, meetings, workshops, etc.

The level of administrative expenditure which can be charged on article 5.500 will be fixed annually by the Commission, in accordance with the mini-budget rules adopted on 22.5.1990.

5. Implications for expenditure

The level of appropriations for this action will be determined by the annual budgetary procedure within the constraints set by the current and any future financial perspectives.

6. Implications for revenue

The contributions by third country contractors towards the cost of administration of the programme will be reused pursuant to Article 27.2 of the Financial Regulation of 21 December 1977 as last modified by Regulation 610/90 of 13 March 1990.

7. Type of control

Monitoring will be performed by a committee composed of delegates of Member States, and control will be executed by officials of the Commission, possibly assisted by independent experts.

There will be administrative control by administrative services of DG XIII and by DGs XIX and XX.

Audit by the Court of Auditors in accordance with the Treaty.

In accordance with article 2 of the Financial Regulation, the use of appropriations will be subject to analyses of cost-effectiveness and the realization of quantified objectives will be monitored.

ANNEX 1

Guidelines for assessing progress made towards the objectives of the IMPACT 2 programme

In order to achieve the objectives of the principal phase IMPACT 2, which follows the initial phase IMPACT 1, defined in Article 1, several measures, referred to in Article 2, will be taken and continued. The progress thereby will then be assessed.

1. Improving the understanding of the market

Annual inventory of available data sources on the information services market. Development of an integrated information service on the structure and performances of the information industry. Setting up of a system for monitoring the demand for information services. Stimulating the development of models and forecasting tools required for the prognosis of information market trends. Annual report on the main changes that have occurred on the information market and recommendations on Community initiatives. The following indicators will be taken into account when drafting these annual reports: growth in intra-EEC trade of databases (we follow on a yearly basis imports and exports of ASCII databases); progress in gateway interconnections between EEC hosts (presently the trend is towards gateways between hosts of the same country or with US hosts). We also follow on a yearly basis progress in gateway interconnections; increase of intra-EEC trade (in value) of database services as compared to domestic growth. We should be in a position to measure this trend through the coordinated surveys we undertake with trade associations; improvement of the geographic coverage of databases produced within the EC in key areas (e.g. standards, business opportunities, company information, credit information, financial information, product information, transport, tourism, legal information). Specific studies could be launched by the IMO at the start and the end of the programme; progress in the interconnection of the basic infrastructure (broadcast, videotex, ISDN); reduction of discrepancies between countries in the installed base of the equipment required to access to electronic information services (the IMO collects such information): reduction of discrepancies between Member States in the consumption of electronic information services in comparison with their GNP; removal of legal barriers in the trade of source data between Member States (data privacy, copyright, possible regulations restricting export of data held by

the public sector); increased participation of LFRs in IMPACT projects. Setting up of a policy for disseminating the results to users and industry. Contribution to the development of a conceptual framework that allows the inclusion of the information services sector in official statistics.

2. Overcoming legal and administrative barriers

Implementation of the data protection directive and related proposals in the information services sector (see COM(90)314). Contribution to the preparation and implementation of a directive on the legal protection of databases. Adoption of guidelines providing a legal framework for European electronic information services. Setting up an information and awareness initiative on computer-related crime.

3. Increasing user-friendliness and improving information literacy

Adoption of common standards for the format and structure of information of all kinds and encouragement of their wider use. Development of a model for Open Information Interchange and development of tools to facilitate information exchange between different systems. Improvement of the quality and accessibility of existing information services. The activity will result in lower training costs and a broadening of the user base. More awareness within the market concerning the value of information. An important instrument used in this context is the European Commission Host Organisation (ECHO) which succeeded to increase the number of its electronic information users from 5 000 to around 10 000 between January 1989 and June 1990. The connection time to ECHO increased between the first half of 1989 until the first half of 1990 from 1 560 hours per month to 2 225 hours per month on average. More than 100 000 copies of awareness material, often in all Community languages, had been produced and distributed mostly on request between January 1989 and June 1990. These and other criteria for evaluation, such as the number of answered questions from the marketplace and the response to knowhow transfer workshops, will be used for reporting during IMPACT 2.

4. Supporting strategic information initiatives

Improvement of the supply of information services in strategically important market sectors. This need was confirmed by the response of 700 organisations to the Commission's calls for proposals. Then, 488 MECU in

development costs were proposed to the Commission, a total which exceeded by a factor of seven the value of the projects which could be supported by the budget granted. More user-friendly, multimode access and presentation of information incorporating text, graphics, images and voice. This will include the creation of a network of publishers for collaboration in multimedia publishing. Improvement in the supply of scientific and technical information, e.g. through support for initiatives in the development of an integrated bioinformatics infrastructure to ensure that bioinformatics develops in line with biotechnology research and industry needs. Also information on engineering materials will be made more accessible to more sectors of industry. The creation of common data sets for geographical information systems and the development of pilot applications. Increase in the volume and quality of information produced and disseminated by organisations in less favoured regions and by SMEs through support for the development of appropriate information services and for the transfer of technology.

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Projet 12.6.90

Questionnaire pour les propositions de programmes
pluriannuels

Programme pour la continuation de la politique et des
actions communautaires visant à créer un marché
intérieur des services d'information

(IMPACT. 2)

I. Présentation du programme

1.1 Objectifs à atteindre et actions à entreprendre et leur
échelonnement dans le temps

Le programme a pour objectifs principaux la création d'un
marché intérieur des services d'information, le renforce-
ment des capacités concurrentielles des fournisseurs euro-
péens de services d'information, la promotion de l'utilisa-
tion des services d'information avancés et le renforcement
des efforts déployés conjointement en vue d'assurer la cohé-
sion de la Communauté sur le plan des politiques en matière
de services d'information. Les services d'information cou-
verts par l'action sont essentiellement des services
d'information professionnelle offerts au moyen des nouvelles
technologies (services de bases de données accessibles en
ligne ou sur supports lisibles par machine).

Le programme est structuré en 4 lignes d'action complémen-
taires et de priorité égale. Ces lignes d'action sont
décrites à l'annexe 1 du projet de décision.

Il est prévu de mettre en oeuvre les 4 lignes d'action en
parallèle, et non consécutivement.

La durée prévue pour le programme est de 5 ans.

1.2 Montants financiers prévus pour chacune des actions

- Ligne d'action I - Améliorer la compréhension du marché 9
MECU
- Ligne d'action II - Surmonter les barrières juridiques et
administratives 8 MECU
- Ligne d'action III - Améliorer la convivialité et promouvoir
la culture de l'information 34 MECU

E
Ligne d'action IV- Soutenir des initiatives stratégiques en matière d'information 49 MECU

1.3 Instruments prévus pour évaluer les résultats

L'article 5 du projet de décision du Conseil prévoit un rapport d'évaluation à mi-parcours et à la fin du programme. En complément, l'observatoire européen du marché de l'information publiera chaque année un rapport sur les changements les plus importants qui sont intervenus sur le marché de l'information.

1.4 Insertion du programme dans les politiques existantes et caractère prioritaire de l'action

1.4.1 Politiques communautaires

Le programme IMPACT.2 s'inscrit dans le prolongement du premier plan d'action IMPACT.1 approuvé par le Conseil le 26 juillet 1988 (décision CCE 88/524).

L'information professionnelle est une ressource stratégique pour le commerce, l'industrie et la recherche. Elle joue un rôle majeur pour l'identification des opportunités d'affaires et des partenaires commerciaux, pour l'innovation et la veille technologique et pour le progrès scientifique et technique.

Les actions envisagées pour promouvoir le développement du marché européen de l'information sont complémentaires des programmes communautaires engagés pour :

- créer et consolider le marché unique (livre blanc sur le marché intérieur),
- stimuler l'innovation et la valorisation des résultats de la recherche, (programmes SPRINT et VALUE),
- promouvoir les nouvelles technologies de l'information, les applications avancées de la télématique et le développement d'une infrastructure de télécommunications moderne (programmes ESPRIT, RACE, TEDIS, politique des télécommunications).
- stimuler la coopération au niveau européen et le partage des ressources entre bibliothèques dans la Communauté européenne,
- réduire les disparités régionales en matière de services de télécommunications (STAR).

1.4.2 Politiques nationales

La plupart des Etats membres de la Communauté ont engagé des politiques nationales visant à stimuler l'exploitation de leurs ressources documentaires. A l'origine centrées sur l'information scientifique et technique, les actions développées par les Etats membres ont été progressivement élargies à tous les domaines de l'information spécialisée (économique, juridique, commerciale, financière). Les politiques suivies sur le plan national concernent notamment la mise en place du cadre réglementaire et de l'infrastructure de télécommunications permettant l'interrogation des services de bases de données; la valorisation des ressources documentaires détenues par le secteur public et notamment les universités et les bibliothèques publiques; des aides directes ou indirectes visant à promouvoir le développement de services d'information avancées.

1.4.3 Caractère prioritaire

La poursuite des actions communautaires visant à créer un marché des services de l'information a un caractère prioritaire en raison des besoins nouveaux que suscite la mise en place du marché unique. Les entreprises de la Communauté ne pourront tirer pleinement bénéfice du grand marché que si se développent dans la Communauté des services d'information de couverture transeuropéenne permettant d'identifier les partenaires commerciaux, les opportunités d'affaires et les réglementations en vigueur dans les autres Etats membres. L'élimination des entraves qui fragmentent actuellement le marché des services électroniques d'information est également une exigence primordiale pour assurer la viabilité à long terme des investissements consentis pour promouvoir les nouvelles technologies de l'information et les réseaux avancés de communication de données.

II Adéquation du recours à un programme

Le rapport d'évaluation du premier plan d'action effectué par un groupe de consultants indépendants ainsi que les analyses de l'observatoire du marché de l'information convergent pour souligner la nécessité de maintenir des efforts soutenus en vue de la création d'un marché des services de l'information. Les résultats obtenus jusqu'ici démontrent que la Communauté a un rôle vital à jouer pour promouvoir le développement du marché et de l'industrie européenne des services d'information. Toutefois, étant donné le caractère préparatoire, le budget plutôt serré et la durée limitée à deux ans du premier programme, certaines initiatives n'ont pu être qu'entamées et doivent être poursuivies pour porter pleinement leurs fruits. Les objectifs poursuivis nécessitent un effort de longue

haleine de la part des acteurs du marché et des autorités des Etats membres. Une action communautaire en la matière ne peut être crédible et exercer un effet d'entraînement que si elle s'inscrit dans le cadre d'un programme pluriannuel d'une durée suffisante pour aboutir à des résultats tangibles tant en ce qui concerne la rentabilité des investissements que l'évolution des conditions du marché.

III Importance financière du programme

3.1 Voir fiche financière pour le montant global et pour l'échéancier. Une éventuelle modification de l'échéancier aurait des répercussions importantes sur la réalisation des actions à coût partagés qu'il est envisagé de lancer en coopération avec les acteurs du marché et les autorités publiques des Etats membres.

3.2 Les actions préparatoires ont été engagées dans le cadre du premier plan d'action de deux ans (décision CEE 88/524) doté d'un budget de 36 MECU.

3.3. La contribution communautaire prévue pour l'intégralité du programme s'élève à 100 MECUS sur 5 ans dont 80% pour financer des projets directement liés aux objectifs poursuivis et 20% pour financer des frais d'infrastructure (y compris le centre serveur ECHO), d'expertise, de publication, de réunion, etc. La plupart de la dotation budgétaire prévu pour le financement des projets prendra la forme d'une subvention pour co-financement avec d'autres sources du secteur public et du financement privé.

3.4 Il n'est pas prévu de demander un remboursement partiel de l'apport financier communautaire.

3.5 La DG XIII a inclus ce programme dans sa programmation financière pour 1991 et 1992 .

FICHE D'IMPACT SUR L'EMPLOI ET LA COMPETITIVITE

I. Raisons principales pour introduire les mesures?

En raison de l'importance de l'information technique, juridique et commerciale pour toutes les branches de l'économie, la mise en place du marché intérieur des services d'information est un objectif indissociable de la réalisation et de la consolidation du marché unique.

- Quel est l'objectif politique: social, environnement, marché intérieur, etc?

Les objectifs poursuivis sont de:

- 1) mettre en place un marché intérieur des services d'information,
- 2) stimuler et renforcer la capacité d'offre compétitive des fournisseurs européens,
- 3) promouvoir l'utilisation des services avancés d'information,
- 4) intensifier les efforts déployés conjointement en vue d'assurer la cohésion de la Communauté sur le plan des politiques en matière de services d'information.

- Quels sont les problèmes communautaires? Les actions doivent-elle être engagées au niveau communautaire plutôt qu'au niveau national?

L'irruption des nouvelles technologies a bouleversé l'équilibre économique traditionnel du secteur des services d'information. Des économies d'échelles doivent être obtenues pour assurer la viabilité des services avancés d'information. Les Etats membres ne peuvent pas réaliser individuellement les conditions de marché qui permettraient aux prestataires de services d'information européens de faire face efficacement à la concurrence mondiale des nouveaux services. Une intervention communautaire est nécessaire pour surmonter les entraves techniques, réglementaires, juridiques et linguistiques qui fragmentent aujourd'hui le marché européen de l'information.

- Que se passerait-il si les mesures proposées n'étaient pas introduites?

Les actions engagées dans le cadre du premier plan d'action de deux ans approuvé par le Conseil le 20 juillet 1988 ne porteraient pas pleinement leur fruit. La mobilisation des acteurs de l'industrie retomberait et la position de la communauté sur le marché mondial de l'information se dégraderait.

II. Caractéristiques des entreprises concernées

- La proposition a-t-elle des implications pour les entreprises?

La proposition a des implications pour les entreprises dans toutes les branches de l'économie.

- type d'entreprises: secteur, taille, localisation, nombre.

Au niveau de la production sont particulièrement concernés:

- l'ensemble du secteur de l'édition technique et commerciale, (composé de quelques grands groupes et d'une multitude de petits éditeurs spécialisés),
- les producteurs de bases de données, (secteur de l'édition électronique composé essentiellement de petites entreprises),
- les courtiers en information (généralement de très petites entreprises),
- les sociétés de services vidéotex (plus de 20 000 services dans l'ensemble de la Communauté généralement fournis par des petites entreprises),
- les centres serveurs (environ une centaine de gros serveurs et de très nombreux petits serveurs spécialisés),
- les prestataires de services de logiciels, et les producteurs d'équipement télématique et de services de télécommunications qui concourent à la fourniture des services de bases de données (généralement des grands groupes à l'exception des prestataires de logiciel spécialisé).

Au niveau de la demande, les entreprises de tous les secteurs d'activité sont concernées. Aujourd'hui les branches qui ont le plus recours aux services électroniques d'information sont:

- l'industrie pharmaceutique, chimique et pétrochimique,
- le tourisme et le transport,
- les banques et les instituts financiers,
- les industries ayant une activité à haute technologie,
- les sociétés de conseil et d'étude,
- les assurances,
- les sociétés d'import/export.

En particulier:

a) Y-a-t-il beaucoup de PME?

Ce sont surtout les grandes entreprises qui interrogent les bases de données techniques et économiques, mais dans des secteurs comme le tourisme (agences de voyage) et le transport, les PME utilisatrices des services avancés d'information sont particulièrement nombreuses.

- La proposition a-t-elle des implications particulières pour les PME?

Oui, dans la mesure où elle vise à élargir l'accès des PME aux services d'information avancés (cf point V ci-après).

- La proposition encouragera-t-elle la création de nouvelles PME?

Oui, l'encouragement donné à la création de nouveaux services d'information entraînera la création de nouvelles PME.

b) Sont-elles concentrées dans des régions qui sont:

- 1) éligibles pour une aide régionale dans les Etats membres ou
- 11) éligibles pour une aide du FEDER?

Les régions les moins favorisées de la Communauté sont particulièrement concernées en raison de la structure particulière de leur économie composée de petites et moyennes entreprises et par l'importance du secteur du tourisme.

- La proposition a-t-elle des implications sur la concurrence?

Oui, les services d'information avancés contribuent à améliorer la transparence du marché.

- Les effets seront-ils plus ressentis dans certaines régions que d'autres?

Non. L'un des objectifs politiques du plan d'action est de renforcer la cohésion interne de la Communauté en matière de services d'information en s'appuyant notamment sur le programme STAR.

III. Quelles sont les obligations que cette mesure impose directement aux entreprises?

La proposition ne prévoit pas d'imposer de nouvelles obligations aux entreprises, mais d'harmoniser certaines obligations qui existent déjà dans les domaines de:

- la propriété intellectuelle,
- l'authentification des transactions électroniques,
- la fraude électronique,
- la protection des données nominatives,
- la responsabilité des services d'information,
- le respect de la confidentialité des interrogations effectuées par les utilisateurs sur les bases de données.

Qu'auront à faire les entreprises pour se conformer à la proposition?

Respecter la législation en vigueur.

- Est-ce que cela entraînera des coûts supplémentaires?

Non. L'harmonisation des obligations existantes ne devrait pas créer des coûts additionnels pour les entreprises concernées, mais au contraire leur apporter des économies d'échelles en ouvrant le marché intérieur.

- La proposition empêchera-t-elle des entreprises de continuer leur activité présente?

Non.

- Qu'advient-il si la proposition n'est pas retenue?

De nouvelles entraves juridiques risquent d'apparaître.

- La proposition augmentera-t-elle ou réduira-t-elle les coûts administratifs?

L'harmonisation des obligations n'entraînera pas de charges administratives supplémentaires pour les entreprises.

IV. Obligations indirectes qui pourraient être imposées par les autorités locales, régionales ou nationales?

- La proposition nécessite-t-elle des actions de la part des autorités locales ou nationales?

Oui, les adaptations juridiques qui découleront des efforts d'harmonisation mentionnés au point III et des actions de formation et de promotion.

- De tels actions entraîneront-elles des coûts supplémentaires pour les entreprises?

Non.

- Quels sont les autres organisations impliquées dans la mise en oeuvre de la proposition, et en quoi leur participation est-elle nécessaires?

Les Instituts de normalisations auront un rôle à jouer pour harmoniser les normes dans le domaine de l'accès aux bases de données. Les utilisateurs et les fournisseurs d'information seront invités à présenter et à mettre en oeuvre des projets pilotes et de démonstration.

V. Dispositions particulières en faveur des PME:

La participation des PME est également explicitement recherchée dans la mise en oeuvre des projets pilotes et de démonstration.

VI. Effets probables sur:

a) la compétitivité des entreprises?

- Quels sont les effets attendus de la proposition sur les forces du marché?

Le développement de l'infrastructure des services d'information avancés facilitera le libre jeu des forces du marché.

- La proposition aura-t-elle effet sur la compétitivité des entreprises de la Communauté par rapport à celle des entreprises des pays tiers?

Dans certains domaines (par exemple commerce, transport ou services financiers) l'accès aux services d'information joue un rôle déterminant. La Communauté accuse un retard par rapport à ses principaux partenaires commerciaux que la proposition vise à réduire. Bien qu'il soit très difficile de quantifier l'impact direct des services d'information sur la compétitivité des entreprises ceux-ci contribuent largement à améliorer leurs performances commerciales.

- Que se passerait-il si la proposition était abandonnée?

L'écart constaté s'aggraverait.

- b) Sur l'emploi?

- La proposition contribuerait-elle à créer ou à réduire des emplois?

Le secteur de l'information est intensif en terme de main d'oeuvre. Les nouvelles formes de diffusion électronique de l'information provoquent l'apparition de nouveaux métiers. Les créations nettes d'emploi sont cependant difficiles à apprécier en raison des effets de substitution.

- Que se passerait-il si la proposition n'était pas retenue?

Face à la concurrence internationale des services avancés, l'emploi dans le secteur européen de l'information, risquerait de se dégrader.

- VII. Les organisations représentatives concernées ont-elles été consultées?

La Commission a préparé sa proposition en étroite consultation avec:

- un comité consultatif de hauts fonctionnaires exerçant des responsabilités sur les diverses politiques liées au développement du marché de l'information dans les Etats-membres,
- un groupe représentatif des principaux fournisseurs européens de services d'information (composé de petites et de grandes entreprises),
- un groupe représentatif des utilisateurs composé des responsables des associations européennes des professions les plus concernées par l'accès à l'information (chambres de commerce, banque, finance, secteur de la santé, agriculture, industrie chimique, sociétés de conseil, etc),
- les différents acteurs du marché de l'information à l'occasion d'un "tour des capitales" qui a réuni plus d'un millier de participants.

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