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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION

**on the final evaluation of the implementation of the Community programme,
Establishment of an Internal Information Services Market (1991-1995)
IMPACT 2**

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Summary

The final evaluation report on the implementation of the IMPACT 2 programme has been established by a committee of five external experts who conclude that the programme has been well managed by the Commission and has provided value for money in the results achieved. The programme has demonstrated the multiplier mechanism, whereby the money spent had an effect substantially greater than the value of the public funds invested. The programme has achieved to enhance the understanding of the information market, to develop a real dialogue with leading market players, to progress on legal issues, to stimulate the use of new media throughout the EU and to encourage business partnerships for collaborative projects to develop new multimedia information products. The programme's initiatives have attracted a large number of partners and have been particularly successful in involving a large number of SMEs. The Evaluation Committee has identified as the main message from the market place that without Community funding the risk in pan-European ventures would be too high.

The Committee also has made a number of recommendations with a view to enhancing and extending information market stimulation initiatives under the forthcoming INFO2000 programme, to reinforce the dialogue with market players and to substantially increase the financial resources. The Commission on the whole agrees with the conclusions of the Evaluation Committee and will undertake to follow-up the Committee's recommendations within the limits of the financial resources. It should be noted that some of these recommendations go beyond the scope of INFO2000, but are already addressed by other EU programmes related to Information Society developments.

Introduction

1. The Community programme on the "Establishment of an Internal Information Services Market" (commonly known and referred hereinafter to as the "IMPACT 2" programme) was launched on the basis of the Council Decision 91/691/EEC of 12 December 1991, covering a period of four years (1991-1995). The total budget estimated as necessary for the implementation of the programme amounted to 64 MECU. The programme had set five objectives to be addressed by measures undertaken within the framework of four action lines. These action lines addressed demand and supply issues of the information services market and complemented each other through the implementation of horizontal and vertical actions to achieve synergy across the programme. The programme specifically required to address SMEs and the development lag of less favoured regions in the European Union.
2. Article 6 of the Council Decision stipulates that at mid-term and at the end of the programme, the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament and the Council, once the committee referred to in Article 4 has examined it, an evaluation report drawn up by independent experts on the results obtained in implementing the action lines referred to in Article 2 and may present, on the basis of these results, proposals for adjusting the orientation of the programme.
3. The final evaluation was carried out by a panel of high-level independent experts set up by the Commission, known as IMPACT 2 Final Evaluation Committee (FEC). The panel, under the chairmanship of Mr B. BLUNDEN, conducted its evaluation between July 1995 and November 1995.
4. The main objectives of the review were
 - to assess whether the objectives of the IMPACT 2 programme have been achieved,
 - to analyse how successful the Commission has achieved its role as a catalyst and stimulator for market development,
 - to identify the needs for and scope of further Community actions to stimulate market development in the context of the European information society.
5. In conducting the evaluation the Final Evaluation Committee has pursued a number of activities including desk research, interviews with EC officials and market actors, and a number of panel meetings.
6. In accordance with articles 4 and 6 of the Council Decision, the IMPACT Programme Committee (IPC) was consulted on the choice of the members of the evaluation panel at its June 1995 meeting, and discussed the contents and conclusions of the Final Evaluation Report at its December 1995 meeting, confirming its overall positive opinion on the implementation of the IMPACT 2 programme and its satisfaction with the report.

Preliminary Remarks by the Commission

7. The Community has over the last two years been confronted with new challenges emerging from the developments in relation to the Information Society. These developments are leading to a global restructuring of the information and communication industries and will be the key to economic growth, competitiveness and employment for the next decade. The importance for the EU to play a major role has been recognised and is being reflected in a number of initiatives including the Commission's **White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment**, the **Bangemann report "Europe and the global information society"**, the **Commission's Action Plan "Europe's Way to the Information Society"** and the **Brussels G7 Conference** devoted to the information society.
8. The multimedia industry is considered to play a key role in the development towards an Information Society, and the growing importance of the content industry is increasingly recognised as a most significant part of that industry, because of its economic potential in terms of turnover, trade balance and employment. This potential is also being perceived by big non-European global players of the ICT industries who are increasingly entering the content business, thus threatening the European position which, hitherto, has been particularly strong in print publishing.
9. The exploitation of Europe's richness in information content is hampered by a number of factors. The European multimedia publishing industry is composed of mainly small and many new actors who are mostly nationally or regionally oriented and operate in an European market environment which is fragmented through linguistic and cultural differences. As a result, the European multimedia market lags behind the US by 3-5 years. This together with the high telecommunication costs and the problems of exploiting public sector information and of trading multimedia rights make the European content industry face serious disadvantages.
10. The Community's **IMPACT 2** programme to stimulate information market development has moved in the course of its implementation from a limited significance to the centre of economic interests. Although the **IMPACT 2** programme had been designed in expectation of these developments it had to be adapted continuously to respond to the fast changing environment. The **IMPACT 2** final evaluation confirms that the Commission has managed to accommodate this situation, as far as it has been possible within the constraints imposed by budget cuts.
11. In implementing the **IMPACT 2** programme, the various initiatives have severely suffered from budget reductions by which only 52 MECU had effectively been allocated of the 64 MECU budget estimated as necessary by the Council Decision.
12. The **IMPACT 2** programme has operated in a climate of global and highly dynamic change of the information industry. This is leading to a restructuring of the global economy with the multimedia content industries becoming a key element in information society development.

General Conclusions of the Evaluation Panel and Commission's comments

13. The Final Evaluation Committee concludes that the IMPACT 2 programme has achieved its objectives overall and efficiently spent the budget allocated to it. It has provided value-for-money in the results achieved and has demonstrated the 'multiplier' mechanism, whereby the money spent by the European Commission has had an effect substantially greater than the value of the public funds invested. The programme has contributed to the development of the European Union infrastructure in the development of the information market leading to the information society.
14. The final evaluation report concludes that the recommendations of the mid-term evaluation have been implemented successfully in the remaining two years of the IMPACT 2 programme, and that the dramatic changes in the information market which have taken place since the introduction of the IMPACT 2 programme have been adequately reflected in the programme's implementation. The programme's initiatives have attracted a large number of partners and have been particularly successful in involving a large number of SMEs.
15. The strategic changes occurring in the information market through widespread use of electronic trading and the development of multimedia publishing and technology convergence make the work of the Commission critical to the success of the EU information society. The Evaluation Committee considers the loss of resources through budget reduction a strategic error, in particular because for SMEs the risk in pan-European ventures would be too high to continue without continued EC funding. This emerges as a clear message from the marketplace.
16. Commission comment:
The Commission in principle agrees with the evaluation committee's assessment. The multiplier effect underlined in the report will continue after the end of the programme and will create a solid basis on which to build INFO2000. The budget cuts have in fact been difficult to manage, in particular for SME project partners for whom the Community funding is critical for the continuity and success of pan-European ventures. This resource limitations have also limited the exploitation of opportunities for pan-European developments which are becoming increasingly critical in a global marketplace. The Commission welcomes the Committee's recommendations for actions to be launched under the forthcoming INFO2000 programme. These recommendations will be taken on board, provided that the budget allocated to this new programme does not deviate too far from the Commission proposal (COM(95) 149 final).

Specific conclusions of the Final Evaluation Panel and Commission's comments

17. The Final Evaluation Report provides many valid recommendations which deserve scrutiny and follow-up. The following paragraphs review the essential conclusions.
18. Action Line 1 aimed at improving the understanding of the information market through the actions of the Information Market Observatory (IMO).

Actions have included the publication of working papers analysing specific market segments, a number of strategic studies addressing specific issues, the creation of an Information Policy Institutes Network and the publication of a widely recognised annual report on the main events and developments in the information market. Wide dissemination of the results of this work has taken place in printed and electronic form, including dissemination via the Internet World Wide Web (WWW).

19. The Final Evaluation Committee concludes that improving the understanding of the market demands greater awareness of change in that market. In that respect the work undertaken by the IMO is considered to be good but insufficient for the needs of the marketplace. The budget reductions have caused constraints in improving the understanding of the market at a time when the development of the information society requires stimulation of the user market. Consequently, the rapidly changing information market in the EU must be reflected in expanded coverage of the IMO which needs reassessment.
20. The Final Evaluation Committee has noted that the three strategic studies published by the IMO had a significant impact on the marketplace and that they are good examples of the Commission understanding properly its role to articulate comprehensively the views of the information content industries, the media and the user community. It is concluded that these studies have been a watershed in changing the relationship between the Commission and the leading players in the EU information industry, and the continuation and extension of that concept is strongly recommended.
21. Commission comment:
The Commission is well aware of the continuous need for improving the market transparency and for articulating the views and needs of the information content market. Without such investigative work, the Commission cannot make its proper contribution to the development of a policy in nurturing the EU information society of the future. Accordingly, the Commission fully agrees to implement the recommendations made in the context of the new INFO2000 programme, but it will largely depend on the resources which will be made available whether or not it will succeed fully in this undertaking.
22. Action line 2 aimed at overcoming legal barriers in the information market. Actions have contributed to the EU's regulatory developments in the fields of personal data protection and the legal protection of databases. They have also addressed other legal barriers which require urgent solutions in the context of the information society, such as IPR in the digital age, information security and the legal implications of the convergence of technology and media. A number of actions have been launched to prepare specific initiatives to be undertaken under the INFO2000 programme, including access to and exploitation of public sector information and in the area of copyright dealing. The actions have been supported by the Legal Advisory Board (LAB) which consists of high level experts, policy advisers and information industry representatives. The work of the LAB is widely recognised and has become more visible through the organisation of conferences in Member States.

23. Whereas the evaluators are satisfied with the activities undertaken, they encourage a further strengthening and expansion of such activities, because **actions by the EC to overcome legal barriers are critical in view of the strategic changes occurring in the information market.** The role of the LAB should further develop to represent the legal and regulatory requirements of the content industries, the media and the user communities. To fulfil this role properly, the LAB should continue to re-structure in favour of increased representation from private sector, and establish better liaison with other consultative industry bodies interested in legal and regulatory matters.
24. Commission comment:
The Commission agrees that further improvements in liaison with other industrial bodies is required to better represent the legal and regulatory needs of industry, commerce and consumers. It is intended to look into the question of how best to reinforce such links under the INFO2000 programme. This needs to be part of a wider Commission strategy as provided for in the framework of the Commission's action plan "Europe's Way towards the Information Society" containing a number of initiatives to establish an appropriate regulatory framework.
25. Concerning activities to stimulate the **application of norms and standards** for information encoding under Action line 3.1 they have been aiming at increasing the awareness and understanding of information standards among market players and to demonstrate the benefit which can be obtained in their use. The publications of a newsletter, "OII Spectrum", of guidelines for the application of standards and of an exhaustive list of information standards have efficiently contributed to this objective. Complementary to these actions the Commission has also launched an initiative to develop specifications for **quality assurance of information products and services.** The regularly updated list of information standards is a unique reference tool which is being used by industry and standardisation bodies throughout the EU and beyond.
26. The Final Evaluation Report identifies the standards stimulating work as important and a unique activity for the EC, because the application of norms and standards will be important, if the Single European Market is to develop into one which captures a significant share of global markets. Although **the work done under IMPACT 2 represents good value for money,** the budget allocated to it has been too modest. The work on norms and standards must be comprehensive in defining information content owners and information user needs across many related technologies. An extension of this activity to improve coverage and market representation is, therefore, strongly recommended.
27. Commissions comment:
Whereas the Commission in principle agrees with this view, it should be noted that the scope of the IMPACT 2 programme, and that of INFO2000 as well, is too narrow to give leverage to this initiative. Instead, those activities are now being closely co-ordinated with the Commission's European Standardisation policy and the results will be integrated into broader concepts presently being considered.

28. **Action line 3.2 on increasing user-friendliness and improving information literacy** has been addressed to users of electronic information services and was composed of three mutually supporting initiatives: the operation of the Commission's host service (**ECHO**) together with the **World Wide Web (WWW) server I'M EUROPE** as a central tool for training, guidance, awareness and virtual meeting and discussion fora; the **network of National Awareness Partners (NAPs)**, which in the Member States maintain close contacts with the regional/national user communities, particularly SMEs, and which perform a steadily increasing number of awareness and training actions; and kick-off training for information intermediaries, SME managers and students in less favoured regions which were subsequently multiplied through co-operation with the EU's **COMETT, SOCRATES and LEONARDO** programmes. Since the **IMPACT** mid-term evaluation, the number of **ECHO** users has increased from 16,000 to 33,000, and the number of connect hours has doubled from 5000 to 10,000 per month. The rapidly growing interest in the **I'M-Europe WWW** server is evident from more than 178,000 document accesses recorded for November 1995, a five-fold increase over the same period in 1994. The level of activity of the **NAP** network is reflected in more than 2000 awareness events for the period 1993-1995, 1000 out of which took place in 1995.
29. The Final Evaluation Committee acknowledges that **ECHO** is an exemplar activity in database host facilitation and provides a unique role in the European information market. Its **I'M EUROPE WWW** server has since its recent launch in September 1994 acquired an established position in "cyberspace". The Committee commends the continuation and further development of this successful activity. The evaluators have taken a particular interest in the **NAPs** activities, because they consider awareness and dissemination as vital features of all EC activities. They conclude that the concept of a distributed system is sound, but noted significant variations in the quality of the **NAPs** and that their operational concept may not fully reflect the changes in the marketplace. It is, therefore, recommended to review the composition of the network and the scope and modus of operation. A new call should set specifications that cause re-focusing and set criteria against which to measure the performance of the **NAPs**. With regard to the training activities the Committee recommends their continuation under the **INFO2000** programme.
30. Commission comment:
The Commission has made provisions to continue the successful activities commended by the Committee under the INFO2000 programme. The very detailed comments and suggestions made in relation to the improvement of NAP operations are considered valid and useful, and the Commission will take account thereof in the forthcoming re-alignment of the NAP network and its activities.
31. **Strategic Information Initiatives (Action line 4)** to stimulate the supply of advanced electronic information products and services have supported pilot projects in the areas of interactive multimedia information (**IMM**), geographic information services (**GIS**) and information services for business and industry (**BIS**). A total of 610 proposals were received in response to three calls for proposals published in 1992, 1993 and 1994. From the first two calls (507 proposals), 84 definition phase projects, leading to 30 implementation phase

projects, were supported. From the third call (103 proposals), 17 full projects were supported, there being insufficient remaining time and budget to operate two phases in 1995. The total budget for these projects amounted to 24.5 MECU. The number of projects supported decreased from 59 in the first call to 17 in the third one which was due to constant budget cuts. The target of **particularly stimulating activities by SMEs has been achieved, in that 65% of the 590 participating organisations in the pilot projects were SMEs. Equally, high participation of organisations from LFRs has been achieved, in that 246 LFR organisations have participated in the pilot projects, i.e. 38%.**

32. The Evaluation Committee concludes that **the Commission has successfully addressed two distinct aspects with these strategic initiatives.** The first is to create exemplars and to reduce risk in experimentation as part of the learning process. As a result many projects are producing healthy commercial results, some even appear to have surpassed expectation. The second aspect is to develop products which enter the marketplace and build infrastructure in a new field, for which visibility is an important feature. These initiatives have contributed to this visibility by presenting high quality products at important events such as IDT Paris, On-line London, the Frankfurt Book Fair and MILIA in Cannes. The evaluators are particularly impressed by the very successful work done in the area of GIS. Because of the interest generated in the pilot projects, this area has expanded into one of policy development and should be considered as an exemplar for further work in other sectors under the INFO2000 programme. It is also confirmed that the criticisms made at the time of the interim review have been overcome. From interviews with project participants, the Evaluation Committee has identified the **main message from the marketplace that without continued IMPACT 2 funding under INFO2000 the risk in pan-European ventures would be too high to continue.** As a consequence the Committee recommends to reinforce these initiatives in INFO2000 and makes a number of concrete proposals for further improvements.
33. Commission comment:
The Commission is aware that there are plenty of opportunities to develop successful European multimedia products and services, and these will increase over the coming years as the information society progresses. It is understood that the private sector is mainly responsible for exploiting such opportunities. However, it is also understood that the public sector has a role to play in creating favourable conditions and in stimulating investment thus reducing the financial risk of the private actors. These public responsibilities need to be fulfilled in consideration of the subsidiarity principle at national and at European levels. The Commission's role consists of addressing these issues in a pan-European context and has made appropriate provisions under the INFO2000 programme. In implementing further initiatives, the Commission will take due account of the many valuable suggestions made in the Evaluation Report. The main obstacle in fully exploiting these unique opportunities for the benefit of the European positions in a global marketplace may ultimately consist of inadequate Community financial resources made available to the programme.

Proposals for future developments

34. **The Final Evaluation Committee has conducted the evaluation in the light of the information society developments, and it has reflected the Commission's proposal for the INFO2000 programme in its recommendations. In recognition of the success of IMPACT 2 and the growing importance of the information market to EC policy overall, the Committee recommends to extend the Commission's information content initiatives by building on the results of IMPACT 2 and to consider an increase of budget for INFO2000. The report provides a rich source of extremely valid and detailed suggestions for such extensions and further improvements.**
35. **Commission comment:**
The Committee's considerations are fully in line with the Commission's views which have found its place in the INFO2000 programme proposal. As a consequence, the suggestions made by the Committee will be taken into account in the implementation of INFO2000 as far as feasible.

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ANNEX 1

Executive Summary of the Report on the IMPACT 2 Final Evaluation

Composition of the IMPACT 2 Final Evaluation Committee

Mr Brian BLUNDEN, Chief Executive, IEPRC, UK - Chairman,
Mr Rolf KAT, Business Development and Analysis, VNU, Netherlands,
Mr René MAYER, Président de section honoraire, Conseil Général des Ponts et Chaussées, France,
Mr Franz G. MÖSL, Unternehmensberatung, Germany,
Mr José Joao CAMPOS RODRIGUES, Director, Challenge, Portugal,
Mr Mogens RASMUSSEN, Managing Director, Sarbaek A/S, Denmark, Secretary

The full text of the evaluation report is available in English from

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Executive Summary: Final Evaluation Committee (FEC) for the IMPACT 2 programme:

The Final Evaluation Committee (FEC) concludes that the IMPACT 2 programme has achieved its objectives overall and efficiently spent the budget allocated to it by the Council. The programme has been well managed by DGXIII/E. It has provided value-for-money in the results achieved. The programme has demonstrated the 'multiplier' mechanism, whereby the money spent by the European Commission (EC) has had an effect substantially greater than the value of the public funds invested. This multiplier effect will continue after the end of the programme and will create a solid basis on which to build Info2000.

The IMPACT 2 programme has contributed to the development of European Union (EU) infrastructure in the development of the Information Market leading to the creation of the Information Society. Specifically the achievements of IMPACT 2 are demonstrated by:

- enhanced understanding by industry and governments of the Information Market through the work of the Information Market Observatory (IMO)
- real dialogue with leading players in the information industry through the strategic studies commissioned by DGXIII/E
- progress on regulatory and legislative issues through the work of the Legal Advisory Board (LAB)
- reduction in technological barriers to information transfer and electronic trading through work on norms and standards
- growth in the use of information by industry and commerce through the work of the European Commission Host Organisation (ECHO)
- stimulation in the use of new media throughout the European Union by exemplars such as the IM-EUROPE WWW server on the Internet
- amplification in the appreciation in industry of the benefits of cooperation throughout the European Union through the work of the National Awareness Partners (NAPs)
- through kick-off actions in the area of training in Less Favoured Regions a large multiplier effect has been achieved by the COMETT programme
- provision of opportunity for the encouragement of business partnerships - particularly SMEs - by Calls for Proposals and financial priming to collaborative projects such as those stimulated by the IMM and GIS programmes
- as a result of the large interest in GIS a communication to Council and the European Parliament is underway
- creation of a European-wide focus on the benefits from the use of information by industry through the Call for Information Services for Business and Industry (BIS)
- development of the total European market by international cooperation programmes such as the Copernicus projects

The Final Evaluation Committee considers the success of the IMPACT 2 programme to make an overwhelming case for support by Member States, the Council and the European Parliament to the Info2000 programme; and for consideration to be given to increasing the budget allocation given to the Info2000 programme.

The reason the Final Evaluation Committee advocates budget increase for Info2000 is that it would follow the logic of recent EC White Papers and the findings of the Bangemann Committee on stimulation to the growth of the Information Society. The EU needs to create jobs and to improve competitiveness in global markets. The Information Market is recognised as a major driver of these two objectives. In turn, the driver of the Information Market is that of users of information and providers of content – such as publishers. Without users and content providers there is no demand for software, hardware, or facilities such as telecommunications. Hence the role of DGXIII/E is critical to the development of the Information Market and to the formulation of EC policy overall. At present this work is under-funded when compared with the size of the challenge which it should address. There appears to be a failure in strategic understanding of this driver mechanism in the EC.

DGXIII/E must be encouraged to continue to articulate the views and aspirations of all information users – industry, commerce and the many branches of the public sector including cultural communities such as education – together with the views and aspiration of content owners, the media and functional activities of commerce such as advertising. DGXIII/E must be mandated to give coherence to these views on all matters related to the Information Market development including the regulatory framework required for competitive trading.

Since the introduction of the IMPACT 2 programme the Information Market has changed dramatically. The Information Market now permeates virtually all organisations in the private and public sectors of the European Union. Multimedia has become the focus of activity by global players as well as industry, commerce, academia and the public sectors and governments in the Member States. This change in the Information Services marketplace has been reflected in the work of DGXIII/E. However, the issue of mandate clarity disadvantages the players in the information industries in the EU and deprives Member State programmes of the benefits of leadership in cooperation, and thus gaining the maximum multiplier effect throughout the EU from Information Society programmes. This situation must be changed. It is a subject which requires urgent political attention at the highest level.

Thus, the recommendations of the Final Evaluation Committee arising from the IMPACT 2 programme may be summarised as follows.

- 1 The IMPACT 2 programme has been completed successfully and within the budget guidelines set out by the Council.

2. In recognition of the success of IMPACT 2 and the growing importance of the Information Services Market to EC policy overall, **consideration should be given to increasing the budget for Info2000. Any attempts by Member States to change – by elimination of activities – any part of the proposed Info2000 programme should be rejected.**
3. The Council and the European Parliament should support an enhanced mandate for DGXIII/E. Four specific changes are recommended. They are:
 - to ensure that DGXIII/E has the mandate to realise its mission to articulate the aspirations of the content and media industries and the total information user community
 - revision by some Member States' governments of their representation on the Advisory Committee for Info2000
 - increased representation from the information content industries in the Information Society Forum
 - creation of a small high level group of commercially expert advisers from private and public sector business communities to advise DGXIII/E in matters of policy development
4. Allocation of budget resources in Info2000 to the development of a methodology for the stimulation of particular sectors or topics is required.
5. In project calls, the adoption of a standard procedure for feasibility stage work which is minimal in bureaucratic procedure is needed. Independent investigation of the project administration procedures in the administrative departments of the EC to reduce drastically paperwork, timescales, approval, acceptance and project support payment settlement should be instigated.
6. The scope of the work of the IMO should be enlarged to take full account of the changes taking place in the Information Market; the dissemination of the IMO report should be speeded up.
7. Increase in the budget for strategic studies with a minimum provision of 750.000 ECU per annum during the duration of the Info2000 programme is advisable.
8. An enhanced mandate for the LAB – and if necessary increased budget – is recommended by:
 - re-statement of the LAB mandate to ensure that all Directorates-General recognise its role to represent the regulatory and legal requirements of the information content industries, the media and the information user community
 - re-assessment by the management of DGXIII/E to ensure it has adequate budgets and resource provision
 - management of DGXIII/E to ensure the LAB undertakes systematic and comprehensive liaison with interested organisations concerned with regulation and legal affairs in the Information Services Market
 - continued re-structuring of the LAB to reduce the representation from academia and increased representation from commercial players in the information market and re-structuring of the representation to reflect a proper balance of all interested parties in the Information Services Market.
9. Increased budget allocation to work on the promotion of standards and specifications under the Info2000 programme is proposed; this should specifically address the issues of:

- measures of quality in new media products
 - meaningful measures of advertising effectiveness in new media.
- 10 A new Call for NAPs should go out to demonstrate understanding of the total Information Market, and to put in place a system of milestones and performance criteria which requires the activity to resemble a marketing development programme for EC activities.
- 11 Continued funding to support ECHO and I'M-EUROPE WWW server is proposed, as well as continued support to training initiatives under Info2000 in conjunction with DGXXII.
- 12 Continued support to interactive multimedia services (IMM) is recommended and specifically:
- continued monitoring of IMM projects over the next two years to ascertain their impact on the information marketplace
 - continuation of a similar initiative to ensure a constant flow of exemplar products
 - extension of this exemplar concept to include creative use of new media in advertising
 - continuation to the initiative to ensure the nurturing of SMEs in the EU as producers and users of information services.
- 13 Re-consideration of specific allocation of budget resources in line with the communication on GIS to Council and the European Parliament.
- 14 Development of stimulation to business and industry information services should be encouraged by:
- continued support for business and industry information services (BIS) which will contribute most to the development of EU infrastructure
 - initiating a programme with private sector research and technology organisations (RTOs) and relevant public sector bodies to develop a coherent business and industry information service network in the EU
 - development of pan-European virtual communities concerned with business and industry futures issues throughout the EU.