EVENTS UPDATE

THE BANGEMANN CHALLENGE

BARCELONA CONFERENCE REVIEWS 108 BANGEMANN CHALLENGE PROJECTS

The Bangemann Challenge is gathering momentum. For its mid-term evaluation, the 108 competing projects from 25 European cities will be presented for the world to see, at a special conference in Barcelona on October 7-9.

In addition to being a showcase for the **Bangemann Challenge** projects, the Barcelona Conference, Cities and Regions Info Way to Europe, is designed as a forum where the future of telecommunications will be debated. It will also be a meeting point for IT and telematics professionals, and for members of local and regional administrations.

The competing projects will be evaluated in four working groups, where project specialists will present and debate their work. A further roundtable discussion will involve the participation of leading specialists, businessmen and academics. This roundtable will be open to the public.

After the Barcelona exchanges, the next step is final evaluations in Stockholm in early 1997. Here the best projects will be chosen as the overall winners.

But regardless of which project team takes the trophy, the real winners are all the participants in this competition, according to Commissioner Bangemann. Once the Bangemann Challenge is completed, each of the 108 projects will have the privilege of being one of the first services in Europe's Information Society. And from here they will go forth and multiply ...

Congratulations and good luck to the project teams from: Amsterdam, Antwerp, Barcelona, Berlin, Bologna, Bradford, Bremen, Brussels, Budapest, Edinburgh, Eindhoven, Stockholm, Gothenburg, Hamburg, Hanover, Helsinki, The Hague, London, Lyon, Manchester, Modena, Paris, Rotterdam, Utrecht, and Vienna. ■

For more information please contact Barcelona City Council, External Relations:
Fax: +34 3 4027877
E-mail: infowaytoeurope@mall.bcn.es
Web Site http://www.bcn.es/infowaytoeurope/welcome.htm

STOCKHOLM URGES CITIES: 'PUT YOUR BEST PROJECT FORWARD'

The Bangemann Challenge is the brainchild of the City of Stockholm. After reading the Bangemann Report on the Information Society, city officials took these concepts to heart and challenged all European Cities of more than 400,000 inhabitants to 'put their best project forward', in a competition to develop information technologies that are focused at citizens. The European Commission soon showed enthusiasm for the project by offering its support.

The Challenge puts the accent on practical applications that met citizens' needs. All projects must be "down-to-earth, user-oriented and in actual operation".

25 European cities have accepted the challenge, and submitted projects in the competition's 10 categories: Teleworking, Distance Learning, University Networks, Telematics for SMEs, Road Traffic Management, Air Traffic Control, Health Care, Electronic Tendering, Public Administrations, and City Information Highways.

But the overall goal of the **Bangemann Challenge** is greater than choosing the winners, it is to help cities learn from one another, by spreading the word of how they are bringing new services to their citizens. To achieve this, an important part of the Challenge will be a series of conferences and seminars held across Europe which offer practical demonstrations of the projects.

While the Challenge encourages the application of the most advanced information technologies, the awards will not be given on the basis of the project that presents the most sophisticated technology, but for the one that creates the services that are most useful.

This, after all, is what the Information Society is all about: services for citizens. ■

Visit the Bangemann Challenge Web Site:
http://www.stockholm.se/bm/affisch.html

Research Policy is just one of the critical elements in the development of the Information Society. We have in our hands all the necessary instruments for the Information Society to become reality. Regulation exists and needs to be shaped carefully to fit the new global economy. Intellectual capital has been recognised as a key asset, and its short term use, and long term development, are essential to any strategy. The Information Society affects all walks of life and universal access to its services is a prerequisite for its success.

The short-term and long-term futures of our economies will depend on how well we use these instruments. The Information Society is an abstract concept, but an important one to understand, as it acts as a guide to change. In concrete terms it consists of technology and changes in our social processes. This means not only investing in commercial use of intellectual capital today, but also providing the means for the many forms of intellectual capital – our culture, education and science – to grow and remain rich and healthy for the foreseeable future.

The 5th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development is in its early planning phase. We have an opportunity to correct some shifts in R&D policy that have taken place over the last decade, for many of these shifts have favoured the short term over the long term. We need a balanced source of intellectual capital, that gives us long-term perspectives as well as short-term strengths.
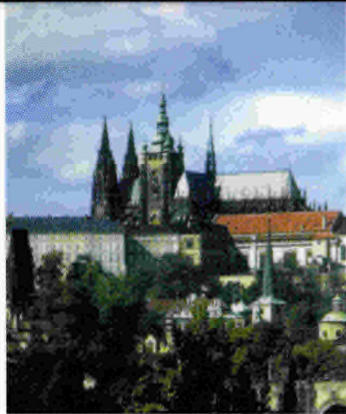
Our commercial investments need to come from our firms. Seed capital should be easily accessible, but responsibility for success must remain with the firm. To achieve this, loans should in principle supersede grants for industrial research. Exceptions can be made – for strategically critical areas, for the common good and for the highly creative. "Blue-sky" projects offer a way to conduct applied research for the long term.

"Think global, act local" applies to our Information Society. The autonomy of today's citizen and the organisations we create, means that this must be planned in an open and flexible way. Consensus will maintain and adjust our guiding vision. And this vision must reach at least as far as the horizon. ■

ERIKA MANN
Member of the European Parliament

EAST/WEST DISCUSSION PREPARES INFO SOCIETY STRATEGY

SECOND CONFERENCE, THIS YEAR IN PRAGUE, BRINGS TOGETHER SCIENCE, INDUSTRY, AND HIGH-LEVEL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

More than 200 representatives of the business, government and scientific communities from the European Union and Central and Eastern Europe came together recently in Prague. The occasion was the Second EU-CEEC Forum on the Information Society, in Prague; and the purpose was to discuss a pan-European strategy for the Information Society. The interest in of Europe's new democracies in this topic was confirmed by the presence of many government Ministers from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

European Commissioner for Industry and Telecommunications, Martin Bangemann, brought this audience the message that close East-West cooperation is vital to ensure smooth progress for the Information Society: "This is not a one way street," he remarked, "It is in the common interest of all Europeans to cooperate closely in the implementation of the Information Society".

He outlined the important work to be done to move this process forward: harmonised standardisation; the creation of a common legal framework to encourage an open European market for new services; and European pilot projects which will increase public awareness and demonstrate the practical usefulness of the Information Society for the citizens.

For Bangemann, the most important key to the Information Society is the liberalisation of telecommunications markets. He commented: "Liberalisation is the most important condition for realising the necessary investments in the development and modernisation of our networks. There is no shortage of finance, but a lack of opportunities to turn new ideas into practice. So it is only when private suppliers of telecommunications, networks and services are admitted that prices will go down and new demand be stimulated."

Addressing the topic of Central and Eastern Europe, Bangemann pledged close cooperation for the development of national strategies which will encourage accelerated implementation of the Information Society and promotion of projects at a European level. To drive this process forward, an Action Plan with 27 project ideas was adopted. Bangemann called upon the participating countries to implement as many of these ideas as possible - with support from the EU. Interested parties are requested to elaborate practical proposals for the implementation and put together European partnerships.

This meeting was the first step in an ongoing dialogue, which will be reviewed again in Autumn 1997 at the third EU-CEEC Forum on the Information Society. Meanwhile, ministerial level meetings on specific themes with representatives of industry and science are planned for Hungary (strategy and policy for the Information Society); Slovenia (implementation of the Action Plan); Estonia (education and training) and the Czech Republic (application of Information and Communications Technologies in public administration).

"Now is the time to go for practical results," said Bangemann. In addition to preparing for 'membership' in the Information Society, "this work is an important contribution to preparation of our Central and Eastern European Partners for eventual accession to the European Union," he concluded. ■

The Action Plan is available on the ISPO Webserver:
http://www.ispo.cec.be/peco/peco002.html

INFORMATION SOCIETY AWARENESS WEEK IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

The Information Society is also affecting the way business is done in Central and Eastern Europe. After the success of the Information Society Awareness Week in May 1996 in the EU, the European Commission supported a similar event in the Central and Eastern European Countries.

As a follow-up to the Forum in Prague in five countries information was offered to SMEs on the challenges and opportunities of the Information Society, with a particular focus on electronic commerce.

The events in Budapest, Ljubljana, Bucarest, Sofia, Szczecin and Tunis were prepared by local organisers.

The target for these meetings were SMEs from the region and from neighbouring countries. Some 100 companies came to receive information on EU-policy, EU-programmes, the impact of new Information and Communication Technologies on their business. Successful examples of innovative companies were also presented. The action plan of 27 project ideas for the implementation of the Information Society which was unveiled in Prague on September 13 by Mr Bangemann was also presented by Commission speakers at all Eastern European events.

The list of speakers was a mix of EU officials, local companies and international enterprises. First-time technology users were helped by hands-on demonstrations. The awareness week will be continued in 1997. ■

5TH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME LAUNCHED

TARGET DATE: 1999; MISSION: TO BENEFIT PEOPLE, JOBS AND COMPETITIVENESS

In a recent communication adopted by the European Commission the scope and focus of the 5th Framework Programme has been officially defined: it is to promote European research for the benefit of people, jobs and competitiveness. Edith Cresson, European Commissioner for Science, Research and Education has set 1999 as the target date for the programme's kick-off. The publishing of a formal proposal detailing the specific areas to be addressed is expected for spring 1997 at the latest.

To be worthwhile and effective, the communication stresses that European research must meet the concerns of European citizens and contribute to meeting the challenge of globalisation in terms of competitiveness, growth and employment. To achieve this, she feels that R&D must concentrate on a limited number of top priorities which correspond to tomorrow's key markets, as well as societal problems affecting European citizens daily lives.

More effective and simplified management of the upcoming programme was also defined as a priority. This is a direct response to feedback received from industry and participants in the Fourth Framework Programme, which is currently underway.

Specifically, this involves streamlining of procedures, a reduction of the number of

programmes, and shortening of deadlines for the selection of proposals, contract conclusion and payments. Increased cross-programme coordination was also cited as a priority. Specific programmes will be managed by more flexible structures such as task forces or focused programmes involving a limited number of Member States. The 5th Framework Programme will also be more open to cooperation with other non-EU countries. ■

For further information:
http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/
dg12/pr10796.html

RESEARCH GOALS: THE SIX PRIORITIES OF THE 5TH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

Unlock the resources of the living world and our ecosystem.
Study the fundamental mechanisms affecting human life and apply the knowledge acquired to health, food and the environment.

People-friendly information society. Create a people-friendly information society by putting more emphasis on content, software, life-long learning and linguistic diversity.

Sustainable growth. Promote competitive and sustainable growth by focusing on energy, transport and agriculture.

Mobility of researchers; research for citizens. Enhance Europe's human potential by improving the training and mobility of researchers, and raising the profile of socio-economic research.
This will help us better understand the impact of technology on work, the economy, education and culture.

Innovation and small business.
Support innovation and the involvement of SMEs in European R&D and the exploitation of research results.

International cooperation.
Strengthen the international role of European research through a greater involvement of non-member countries, in particular Central and Eastern Europe and Mediterranean countries.

REINFORCING THE COMMISSION'S INFORMATION SOCIETY STRATEGY

FOCUSING TECHNOLOGY ON CITIZENS' NEEDS

In its recent adoption of a package of measures relating to the Information Society, the European Commission has reconfirmed the importance of focusing on social, societal and technical aspects of the Information Age; and that common standards should be agreed on sooner rather than later – in the citizens' interest.

This opinion was reinforced as the core of the EU's Information Society Strategy in two communications, a Green Paper and a draft directive aimed at creating a common view and open communication between the European Union and Member States on all Information Society matters. The Commission has called on European heads of state and government to revise and consolidate the 1994 Information Society Action Plan at their Dublin summit in December 1996. It will be on the agenda of a special Information Society Council on 8 October 1996.

The communication on *The implications of the information society on European Union policies* proposes guidelines and specific actions for adapting the Information Society Action Plan. It identifies four priorities:

Improving the business environment by ensuring a optimal implementation of the post-1998 telecoms regulatory environment and improving user confidence.

Improving education and training by incorporating new information and communication technologies (ICT) in education and training systems. These should be reinforced in the 5th Framework Programme.

Promoting the human face of the Information Society by boosting the contribution of ICT to regional and social cohesion, and reinforcing consumer protection and government's ICT use.

Taking a global perspective by meeting the challenge of global economics, and helping developing countries participate in the global information society.

The communication on *Standardisation and the information society* examines how the standards required for the development of the information society can best be established. Standards are particularly important for the interconnection of computer and telematics networks, which is a critical to consumers benefitting from telecoms liberalisation which is progressing rapidly today.

To support the global nature of the

information society and the fact that its development must be market-driven, the communication calls on national and European standards bodies to reach a consensus, and for governments and industry to cooperate on establishing common standards. At the same time, the European Union must ensure that standardisation takes place in a competitive environment, protect consumers and ensure that all citizens equally benefit from the information society.

The Green Paper on *People first: Living and working in the Information Society* addresses the key social challenges raised by the information society. It also invites public comment and debate on issues such as the information society's impact on industrial production, work organisation, employment, social cohesion and people's daily life.

The aim of this paper is to ensure that the benefits of today's technological progress reach the whole of our society, not just a select few. Equal access to services and a fair distribution of the potential for prosperity should also be considered 'a basic right' for all citizens.

Finally, in its communication *Regulatory transparency in the Internal Market for Information Society services*, the Commission proposes a directive aimed to create a process of open communication and consultation between the Commission and Member States on future draft national regulation on information society services. This 'transparency mechanism' aims to prevent inconsistencies and obstacles that could arise from isolated and uncoordinated rules adopted at the national level. ■

For further information:
http://www.ispo.cec.be/infosoc/legreg/infosoc.html

COUNTDOWN TO 98

In a previous issue of ISPO news, some inaccuracies were introduced in the description that we published of the European Telecommunications Office. This article gives a renewed overview of the Agency, its role and responsibilities. ISPO apologises for any inconvenience this error may have caused.

THE EUROPEAN TELECOM-MUNICATIONS OFFICE (ETO)

The European Telecommunications Office (ETO) was created by the European Committee on Telecommunications Regulatory Affairs (ECTRA), one of the three committees of the CEPT (Conférence Européenne des Postes et Télécommunications).

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the establishment of ETO came into force on 30 April 1994. It has been signed by 23 countries representing more than 80% of the weighted votes of the CEPT members. 15 of the countries which signed the MOU also signed the One-Stop-Shopping arrangement on licensing. ETO commenced operations on 1st September 1994, and deals specifically with licensing and numbering issues.

ETO signed a framework contract with the European Commission on 9 September 1994 in accordance with the MOU between the European Commission and ECTRA, signed on the same day. Under this contract several work orders from the Commission have been signed, concerning licensing and numbering issues where ETO, on behalf of ECTRA, performs studies for the Commission. A first group of work orders for which reports have been transmitted or will be transmitted to the European Commission before the end of 1996 deal with the harmonisation of licensing regimes on bearer data services and other liberalised services such as premium rate services and voice telephony to closed user groups. Studies on selected satellite services are also being performed. A second group of works orders will be performed dealing with specific licensing conditions of two categories of operators, dominant operators and mobile operators, as well as essential requirements and consumer protection conditions.

On 8 November 1995 a One-Stop-Shopping procedure for obtaining authorisation to provide non-reserved telecommunications services in Europe was established. ETO acts as administrator of this procedure. ETO has also created a database which contains information on the licensing regimes of all the CEPT countries having signed the arrangement on the One-Stop-Shopping procedure on licensing. The database is accessible via the Internet, address: http://www.eto.dk ETO's tasks regarding the numbering of telecommunications networks and services are to form a centre of expertise which provides information on numbering to ECTRA members; to create a European Numbering Scheme (ETNS); to conduct studies and issue reports on numbering for the European Commission on use of and access to numbering resources and numbering related to PCS. A second group of work orders deal with number portability, carriers selection and ETNS. ■

ETO is located in the same building as the Danish National Telecommunications Authority (NTA) Holsteinsgade 63, DK-2100 Copenhagen Tel: +45 35 43 80 05 or Fax: +45 35 43 60 05.

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This newsletter and previous issues are also available on the web at: http://www.ispo.cec.be/ispo/newsletter/index.html

CALLS & CALENDAR

CALLS FOR PROPOSALS: SEARCH FOR DEMONSTRATION PROJECTS

Two Calls for Proposals issued by ISPO, and European Commission Directorate-General III (Industry) aimed at funding demonstration projects for new services for the Information Society, have attracted the interest of hundreds of organisations and companies across the European Union.

The first Call (96/S 149-87447/IT) issued by the Information Society Activity Centre/ISPO, is for proposed demonstration projects in a number of areas – including services for women, small communities, less favoured social groups – consumers, etc. closed on September 23. Several hundred requests for information were received (more info at http://www.ispo.cec.be).

The second Call (96/S 149-87448/IT) issued by DG III, is open until October 4. It focuses on the application of standards and the promotion of awareness on their use. The main areas to be addressed here are: electronic commerce; multimedia systems; teleworking and health care. For more information, and to receive the complete information package, please contact Fax + 32 2 299 16 75. e-mail: antonio.conte@dg3.cec.be

Cities and Regions Infoway to Europe: "The Bangemann Challenge mid-term review in Barcelona" Barcelona (E) 7-9 October 1996 Ajuntament de Barcelona Olga Vilanova Fax: +34 3 4027877 http://www.bcn.es/infowaytoeurope/welcome.htm

5th European Forum of Competitive Technology – TEC '96 Grenoble (F) 15-17 October 1996 Grenoble Chamber of Commerce & Industry Fax: +33 76 282795 e-mail: tec@esc-grenoble.fr

European Telework Week 4-11 November 1996 Three major events:

3rd European Assembly on Telework and New Ways to Work Vienna (AT) 4-6 November Fax: +43 1 495044240 e-mail: j.hochgerner@magnet.at http://www.bco.co.at/bco/tw96/

Telework Deutschland '96 : New Ways to Work and Employment Bonn (D) 11-13 November 1996 Werner B.Korte, Empirica GmbH Fax: +49 228 9853012 e-mail: konferenz@empirica.de CompuServe: 100065,1675 http://www.empirica.de

Tomorrow's Workplace London (UK) 6-8 November 1996 Fax: +44 1734 622230 e-mail: teleworkevents@cix.compulink.co.uk

CYBERCITIES – The everday life in the digital cities Rome (I) 6-7 November 1996 Francesco Marcolini Fax: +39 6 36001144 e-mail: publica@m.vox.vol.it

ACTS Mobile Communications Summit Granada (E) 27-29 November 1996 Dr José Luis de Miguel Fax: +34 1 3374402 http://www.telefonica.es/acts.mobile

Systems 96 Munich (D) 21-25 October 1996 Fax : +49 89 51 07 - 175 http://www.systems.de

European IT Conference and Exhibition '96 – EITC Brussels (B) 25-27 November 1996 European Commission DG III Industry Fax: +32-2-640-66-97 http://www.cordis.lu/esprit/src/eitc96.htm e-mail; eitc96@dg3.cec.be

Seminar AEG SIGNUM Privatisierung des Arbeitsplatzes: belebt Telearbeit die Arbeitswelt? Frankfurt am Main (D) 31 October 1996 Mr. J. Karnstadt Tel: +49 69 66 98 23 20 Fax: +49 69 66 98 23 13

JENC8 - 8th Joint European Networking Conference Edinburgh (GB) **12-15 May** 1997 JENC8 Secretariat, c/o TERENA Tel: +31 20 639 1131 Fax:+31 20 639 3289; e-mail: jenc8-sec@terena.nl http://www.terena.nl/jenc8

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