BANGEMANN CHALLENGE

THE BANGEMANN CHALLENGE GOES GLOBAL

AN INFORMATION SOCIETY INVITATION FOR EVERY CITY ON THE GLOBE

What began as a European competition has grown into an important network for the exchange of experiences about the Information Society. In its second phase, the Bangemann Challenge - organised by the City of Stockholm in response to the "Bangemann Report" and supported by the European Commission - invites every city in the world to participate.
And why not? This is exactly what the Information Society is all about.

The completion of the European Bangemann Challenge - after the awards ceremony in Stockholm in January - marked the beginning of the Global Bangemann Challenge with the aim of expanding the challenge to all cities around the globe. Mats Hulth, the Mayor of Stockholm, explains why Stockholm decided on a new venture:

"Word of the Bangemann Challenge spread to cities outside Europe and we received many calls from city administrations wanting to participate. This showed us that there was a great interest, worldwide, in sharing knowledge of the use of information technology for the benefit of people. The decision to go on was easily made!"

The new Challenge will last for about two years, beginning in January 1997 and ending in June 1999. The coordination team in Stockholm expects to attract some 700 entries from over 150 major cities around the world. A partnership of key cities in Europe will work to spread information in Europe and the rest of the world to ensure that the Global Challenge becomes a global success.

Mats Hulth explains that as the project goes global participating cities will have access to even more uses for information technologies:

"The Global Challenge will encourage the transfer of knowledge and technology applications between cities and regions on the cutting edge of these new information services to their less-developed counterparts"

Projects can be submitted to the Global Bangemann Challenge in 11 categories.

1. New business structures
2. IT services for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs)
3. Electronic Commerce
4. Public Service and Democracy
5. Health care
6. Culture and Media
7. IT in all areas of education
8. Lifelong learning
9. Environment
10. Traffic
11. Universal connectivity

Evaluation criteria

The projects submitted to the Global Bangemann Challenge will be evaluated by an international jury with representatives from each of the participating continents. The main criteria will be: "What benefit does this project bring people and society?".

In addition to each project's technical and service achievements, the jury will look for the projects' efforts to eliminate segregation, promote gender equality and improve conditions for the disabled.

The projects should also contribute to regional development by creating new job opportunities which from a global perspective can have a positive impact on world peace and prosperity. The jury will also take into consideration the positive effects that the projects have on the environment.

To enter the Challenge participants must show that there is a sufficient degree of implementation of their projects during the course of the competition. ■

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www.stockholm.se/bm

This newsletter is also available on the ISPO
Web: http://www.ispo.cec.be

Editorial by Magnus Lemmel
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STANDARDISATION AND THE GLOBAL INFORMATION SOCIETY

Information technology has now penetrated almost all aspects of our society. New markets - that did not exist several months or years ago - have emerged with a wide variety of new products, services and applications. This diversity results in greater competition which is essential to improve quality and lower prices. However, there is a danger that these differences will result in technical incompatibility, locking customers into specific systems that may not ultimately meet their needs. The interoperability of networks, products and applications - that allows users to work with other any type of system of information service or system - is an ever more crucial issue. Today, it tends to be driven by market forces. The particular features of the IT market - notably short product-cycles, a high degree of global integration and a limited emphasis on security - have created a situation where the formal consensus process by which standards have typically been created is largely absent. In any case, yesterday's consensus process is now generally recognised to be too slow to be effective, particularly in the context of the rapid changes which we are facing today. However, as Europeans we must not forget that the consensus process offers major advantages. European standards bodies, such as CEN (European Committee for Standardization) CENELEC (European Committee for Electrotechnical Standardization) and ETSI (European Telecommunications Standards Institute) have solid experience in the formulation of specifications. They have a significant role in establishing connections, both between the European and world bodies, and between users and manufacturers. Despite the emergence of the Single Market, there remain region-specific aspects, of which language is the most conspicuous, and which must be respected if Europe is not to be left at a constant disadvantage. Furthermore, the European Commission feels that a certain level of consensus between the different players involved is still important in the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) sector, and has encouraged such initiatives. The Memorandum of Understanding on Open Access to Electronic Commerce for European SMEs is one recent example. But if we want the consensus approach to be a success, we must ensure that users' needs are properly represented, and that an appropriate platform for European companies will be provided to address the issues. This will probably be done through a 'workshop' structure, as industry has already identified this as a need. The international conference "Global Standards for the Global Information Society of the 21st Century" that will be hosted by the European Commission this coming October, will be a decisive step in this direction. It will provide an open forum for all market players. European priorities and concerns need to be expressed clearly at the conference. This requires close collaboration between all European actors - the industry, standards authorities, users and customers. I am confident that all these groups will contribute constructively to this end. ■

Further information on the conference can be found in the article on page 2.

STANDARDISATION

COMMISSION HOSTS FIRST CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL 'IS' STANDARDS

Major world regions, industries and citizens represented

The first conference which examines the questions related to creating standards for the Information Society will be held in Brussels on October 1-3, 1997. The Global Standards for the Information Society conference is a response to the recognition by the G7 Ministers in February 1995 of the importance of promoting interoperability to further develop the Global Information Society (GIS) and the Global Information Infrastructure (GII). This event is hosted by the European Commission (DG III.B) and is sponsored by the International Standards Organisation (ISO), International Electrotechnical Committee (IEC) and the International Telecommunications Union (ITU). An international Steering Group chaired by Mr. Lamborghini, member of the board of Olivetti is coordinating its preparation. The planning team stresses that the conference focuses on market developments. It aims to open a forum for the essential market players in the Information Society to:

- Exchange views regarding actual and potential applications along with relative practical experience.
- Identify factors leading to the successful and rapid implementation of selected applications, and the business opportunities that will be offered by overcoming these factors.
- Investigate the standards (voluntary and mandatory) and related technical regulations that are needed to shape the implementation of GIS/GII, so that it can realise its full potential worldwide.
- Share perspectives on the appropriate timing of the implementation of applications to meet GIS/GII needs.
- Explore new ways to facilitate development of new products, markets and applications by - for example - creating the right standards at the right time, and to identify and promote methods for achieving global functionality and interoperability.

Organisers are working to bring together a balanced audience representing all the important players in the Global Information Society. All major world regions - both developed and developing, relevant industries, public authorities, standardisation organisations, service providers and academics will be represented. The programme is being developed to ensure that a priority is given to creative discussion. The conference plans to disseminate the results of these discussions very broadly, so that awareness of key issues and solutions is known by interested players around the world.

The conference will focus on four major themes and each participating region has taken the lead role in coordinating one of the themes in synergy with the others:

- **Electronic commerce (US)** - covering topics such as banking, financial services, teleshopping and trade.
- **Services to the public (Europe)** - discussing information services, libraries, museums, distance welfare services, education, tele-medicine and intelligent transportation telematic systems.
- **Individual use (Canada)** - focusing on interactive entertainment, tele-learning and the provision of information and communications.
- **Communications infrastructure inter-operability (Japan)**

The results of these thematic workshops will be summarised and presented to all the conference delegates for discussion in the plenary session on the last day of the event. Europe has to speak with one voice at this conference. The European input to all the themes of the conference requires close coordination to reflect European priorities and concerns of all relevant actors - industry, standards authorities, users, consumers - that have expressed their intention to contribute. ■

All updates and relevant information on the conference programme can be consulted on the ISPO Internet site. http://www.ispo.cec.be/standards/conf97

INTERNATIONAL ASPECTS

IS AND DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: ACHIEVEMENTS, OPPORTUNITIES, SHORTCOMINGS

COMMISSION COMMUNICATION ON INFORMATION SOCIETY AND DEVELOPMENT

The new concept of the 'Global Information Society' has implications that go far beyond mere geographic coverage. An important element is the potential that today's new information tools have to create new political, economic and legal rules for the world. Just as they can bring people and countries together, these tools can exclude sections of the world's population who risk being left behind if they do not have access to inexpensive and good quality telecom and infrastructure and services to link them to the Information Society.

The European Commission's Communication on Information Society and Development is a new political instrument focused specifically on associating developing countries to the emerging Information Society. This initiative began at the G7 Conference in Brussels and was continued in Midrand during the ISAD Conference, and in Rome during the Conference for the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Information Society.

This document does more than review the new opportunities - paying particular attention to satellite communications and Internet applications - for developing countries.

It also highlights recent Commission and Member State achievements in creating Information Society applications in areas such as; education, administration, health, transport, commerce, and multimedia publishing as well as in cooperation with developing countries in those areas.

The Communication does not call for new financial instruments, but for a more optimised use of the existing Commission resources in promoting Information Society pilot projects in developing countries. It also stresses the importance of the regulatory framework for encouraging private funding for projects in these regions.

The responsibility for creating equality in the Global Information Society is a shared one, concludes the Communication. Close cooperation and coordination is required between international organisations and institutional investors such as the ITU, UNESCO, UNDP, the World Bank, the European Investment Bank, regional Banks and EU Member States. And the developing countries must actively promote local interest and elaborate appropriate strategies including priority projects that best meet their needs. ■

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The full text of the communication is available on the ISPO Web at: http://www.ispo.cec.be/isad

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IS SURVEY – EUROBAROMETER

The Information Society Activity Centre is about to release the results of the new "Measuring Information Society" survey on the state of awareness and use of modern Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in Europe on the ISPO server. The study contains information from about 15,000 citizens questioned throughout Europe. It represents unique comparative data of the European ICT user profile and his/her attitude and interest towards both technologies (such as cellular phones, satellite dishes and the Internet) and Information Society applications such as distance learning, computer supported political participation, government information services to citizens, finding a job on line etc.

The results will be published on the ISPO server (*http://www.ispo.cec.be*) in the coming weeks.

You can already point your browsers to the ISPO home page and download the results and comments from the pilot study made in 1995.

WO IST LE CROOK?!

MULTILINGUAL COMMUNICATION TOOL HELPS COPS CATCH CROOKS ... IN ANY LANGUAGE.

Crime doesn't stop at borders. As the European Union's internal borders are progressively removed, citizens are enjoying their right to free movement between countries with no customs or immigration constraints. From a safety and security point of view, guaranteeing this fundamental right also means close cooperation between police forces to keep a watchful eye on the movements of cross-border and organised crime.

The key to achieving this is clear communication between police officers in different regions and countries. But language is often the major barrier to rapid information exchange contact between regional police forces in various Member States.

The LinguaNet project aims to bridge this language gap by providing secure cross-border communications, with features such as multi-lingual text, speech and graphics, for police forces and emergency services.

Launched in October 1995, LinguaNet is the first multilingual communications system aimed at meeting the need for rapid communications of police and emergency services in Europe. LinguaNet communication terminals are now used by 22 police forces in six EU Member States (Belgium, Denmark, France, The Netherlands, Spain and the UK). Run by Prolingua Ltd., a company specialised in language telematics based in Cambridge, United Kingdom, LinguaNet is co-financed by the European Commission's Telematic Applications Programme.

One of the key features of LinguaNet is its pre-formatted messages that are instantly forwarded in the recipient's language. Users simply complete boxes which provide essential information such as a suspect's name, birthdate, nationality, passport number, clothes or hair colour.

Additional information can include images, such as fingerprints or a photograph. LinguaNet also offers an on-line chat function in the user's mother tongue, assisted by an electronic dictionary.

Upgrades and new features are being developed by Prolingua together with Dutch electronic giant, Philips. These will include speech recognition and the capacity to translate text into speech for message transmission via operational radio systems. Another function will be a voice-activated database, where the user can search for detailed information by pronouncing a keyword into the Linguanet system. Finally, Prolingua will introduce a controlled grammar tool, which instantly translates messages simplified phrases which cannot be formatted.

Developers say that the sky's the limit with this rapidly-evolving technology, and plans are already in the making to adapt the Linguanet system to other applications. These include medical services or civil defence, or the effective management of trans-national crises - such as earthquakes, industrial disasters, serious sea or river pollution or a major maritime accident. ■

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Left to right:
Kent Police Constable K. Mitchell,
David Matthews (Prolingua),
His Royal Highness The Duke of Edinburgh, Adj Peter de Lathouwer (Rijkswacht Belgium),
Baroness Brigstoke,
Edward Johnson (Prolingua)

Adj Peter de Lathouwer of the Rijkswacht Belgium helps track a bank card and car thief at a demonstration of the LinguaNet system. Operational police messages with auto-translation were exchanged with police units in several European countries during the visit of His Royal Highness, The Duke of Edinburgh to the LinguaNet project on February 10 1997.

SPRITE-S2 CALL FOR PROPOSALS: ELECTRONIC PROCUREMENT TOOLS AND METHODS

Information and Communication technologies have played a central role in the improvement of productivity and service delivery, in any sphere of industrial and professional activity as well as within and between administrations and the general public. The forthcoming opening of the market for telecom services throughout Europe will provide ICT users with even more opportunities, challenges and freedom of choice among suppliers, systems, and services. In this context, a major concern for public and private procurers is the possibility to develop flexible, interoperable ICT solutions, which are supplier independent and enable future upgrades. To meet these requirements there is a need for relevant, timely standards. Instruments are required to support and guide the procurers across the various steps of the procurement cycle. To respond to these needs, a Call for Proposals for shared-cost actions in the field of "Support and guidance to the Procurement of Information and Telecom Systems and Services" (SPRITE-S2) is planned for publication in June 1997.

The aim of SPRITE-S2 - which is being prepared in close consultation with Member State procurement specialists, concerned industrial sectors and associations - is to encourage best practice optimise existing methodologies and tools, and promote the knowledge and application of international and European standards.

The work items of this Call are expected to cover a wide range of themes, including trials in working environments, special needs of user groups (mobile workers, the disabled, etc.) and topical issues like the 'Year 2000' problem, the transition to the euro, security in multi-vendor solutions. Particular attention will be given to the design and the application of benchmarking techniques, to measure the economic benefits resulting from the use of specific procurement practices. ■

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INFORMATION SOCIETY NEWS

ISPO CORNER

ISPO PROJECT PROFILE

HOW CAN MUNICIPALITIES HELP DEVELOP THE INFORMATION SOCIETY?

Local authorities are the 'shop window', or first contact point that can help introduce information services to citizens in many communities. To help further the role of town, council and municipal authorities in bringing the Information Society directly to citizens, an innovative information project called ILSA (*Information Society in the Local Areas*) has been started in four countries. The project partners are ANCITEL (Italy); KDZ (Austria), KT- Datacenter (Finland) and TACSA (Spain). Each organisation has direct or indirect links to the respective national associations of local authorities. ILSA is co-funded by these organisations and ISPO. The ILSA group's goal is to inform local authorities of the possibilities and advantages that information services offer them, and to highlight types of services that they can offer to citizens and local businesses. ILSA is being put in place in three phases.

- Information collection. A census will be conducted of new services supplied to citizens and businesses, by municipalities with a population between 5,000 and 120,000. Information will also be collected to identify trends in how municipalities are providing new information services to their citizens.
- Identification of the services provided by municipal authorities that have the greatest potential for telematic applications.
- Concentration on the transfer of know-how, sharing and planning of joint initiatives between municipalities.

Implementation will involve: the selection, in each country, of the five most representative services of how municipalities assist the Information Society to advance in a uniform manner; a report illustrating the services and the creation of an Internet site linked to all the sites of the European Association of Municipalities and ISPO; and national and local conferences and seminars for discussion and training. The final objective of the project is the creation of a permanent open tool to monitor the development of Information Society services This will allow the group to select the most innovative and successful

initiatives; give the local actors a short list of solutions, behaviours and expertise. Most importantly this will give municipalities access to know-how and cooperation resources. The result of the first phase will be available soon on the ISLA web site. ■

For further information, contact ANCITEL, Massimo Lucchese, Giorgio Carbonara or Moira Benelli Tel: +396 76291210/76291282 e-mail: isla@ancitel.it

CALLS FOR PROPOSALS

PROMOTING AWARENESS OF THE INFORMATION SOCIETY AND RELATED ISSUES

The Information Society Activity Centre (ISAC) will issue a Call for Proposals, to be published in the Official Journal, in May 1997. The Work programme was presented at the recent ISPO Information Day, which welcomed over 250 interested participants from the public and private sector in Brussels on April 14.
The general objectives of the Information Society Work programme are:

- To increase public awareness and understanding of the potential impact of the Information Society and its new applications
- To help establish the Information Society in Europe by promoting widespread access to and familiarity in the use of new Information services and applications

Proposals are invited in the following areas: Helping to establish the Information Society by promoting the use of concrete applications; Understanding the political, economic and social impact of the Information Society; and Accompanying measures.
A detailed description of the areas can be found in the Information Package. The deadline for submission of proposals is 20 June 1997. Projects can receive funding up to 500,000 ECU covering no more than 50% of the total project cost. ■

The Information Package and additional documentation corresponding to the Call for Proposals 1997 can be ordered from the ISPO helpdesk:
Fax: +32 2 2994170
e-mail: ispo@ispo.cec.be
or can be downloaded from ISPO's server at: http://www.ispo.cec.be/ ispo/callidx.html

CALENDAR

JENC8 - 8th Joint European Networking Conference
Edinburgh (GB)
12-15 May 1997
JENC8 Secretariat, c/o TERENA
Fax: +31 20 6393289;
e-mail: jenc8-sec@terena.nl
http://www.terena.nl/jenc8

Business Information in the Information Society
Rome (I)
22-23 May 1997
Publica - Organizzazione & Strategia
Fax: +39 6 36001144
e-mail: Publica@mbox.vol.it

Stockholm IT Week
Stockholm (SE)
26-30 May 1997
Anette Holm
Fax: +46 31 7110597
e-mail: anette.holm@itweek.stockholm.se

4th International Conference on Intelligence in Services and Networks
Como (I)
27-29 May 1997
Roberta Gobbi, Italtel
Fax: +39 2 43887989
E-mail: gobbi@settimo.italtel.it
http://www.dir.fh-sbg.ac.at/ACTS/IENM/CONCERTATION/ISN

The Social Quality of Europe Social Balance: a Common Interest
Amsterdam (NL)
8-10 June 1997
Dr. Jan Steyaert
Fax: +31 40 2435274
e-mail: J.Steyaert@fontys.nl

EEMA '97 Electronic Commerce and Messaging in Europe
Maastricht (NL)
15-18 June 1997
Fax: +44 1386 793268
e-mail: cgibson2@attmail.com
http://www.eema.org

Online Cooperation International Conferences on Teleworking
Berlin (DE) 23-24 June 1997
Singapore, 28 August 1997
ICEF
Fax: +49 30 3249833
e-mail: 100770.3137@compuserve.com

ETIS '97 Conference: IT on the Move
25-27 June 1997
The Hague (NL)
Ian Clark - ETIS
Fax: +32 2 2192628
http://www.belgacom.be/etis/etis97.htm

Electronic Commerce in the framework of Mediterranean Countries Development
EUROMED Working Conference
Metsovo (GR)
4-6 July 1997
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ISPO SECRETARIAT

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Germany	0130 821943
Greece	00800 3212635
Ireland	1800 553224
Italy	1678 76790
Luxembourg	0800 2929
Netherlands	060 222086
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