MOBILE COMMUNICATION
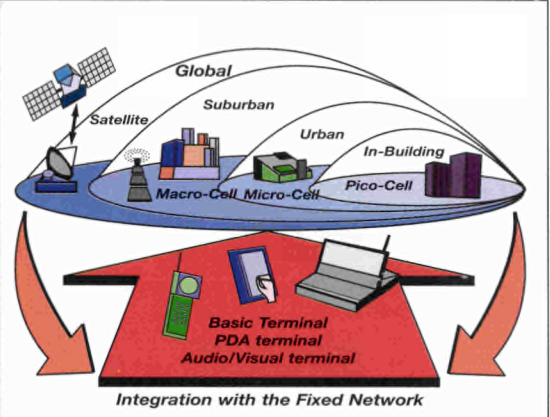
SPECIAL REPORT: CREATING THE 'WIRELESS SOCIETY'

GLOBAL MOBILE: THE BRIGHT STAR IN THE FUTURE OF TELECOM

As mobile services form a seamless link with the existing ground-based infrastructure, the sky's the limit for users in the mobile mass market.

Universal Mobile services form a seamless link between the Wireless Society and the existing land-based infrastructure. The goal: give the user every possible communications option - and keep it simple.

Today the average penetration of mobile telecommunications in Europe is about 9%. Over the next decade, experts predict that this figure will have increased to well over 50% - where mobile voice and data communications will rapidly shift from its role as a tool for the 'business elite' to a mass market consumer product. This rough calculation alone shows the importance that mobile telecom services represent for the telecommunications sector, and for Europe's economy. More importantly, it is a signal of the urgency for European legislators, manufacturers and telecommunications service providers to cooperate in building the new foundation for a European approach to mobile communication.

The European Union recognised this potential several years ago, when the first R&D initiatives were taken to bring together European industry in the development of a 3rd Generation Mobile Telecommunications System referred to as UMTS. The Bangemann Report on the Information Society identified mobile and personal communications as a necessary building block of the Information Society and advised that its potential should be strengthened.

Some industry players are taking this logic a step further, arguing that it is mobile telecom services that will be the main catalyst for truly bringing the Information Society to the mass market.

But before the first new innovations can be introduced, a series of legal and operational challenges must be resolved. The main questions that European legislators, manufacturers and operators must resolve together are: what new technical and operational standards are required to accommodate the emerging mobile services - multimedia, Internet access, person-to-person video, etc.; What are likely growth scenarios for the market in the short medium and longer term and which is the most appropriate regulatory framework?

The creation of the Universal Mobile Telecommunication System Forum - which was applauded by the European Parliament and officially inaugurated on 16 December 1996 - is the first step in defining a common European vision for the sector.

NEW FORUM CREATED TO CHART THE FUTURE OF MOBILE TELECOM

What lies beyond GSM? Mobile multimedia...

The foundation for all mobile communications services that lie beyond GSM will be discussed in the recently-created Universal Mobile Telecommunications (UMTS) Forum, an international initiative of some 60 telecom operators, manufacturers, regulators, and information technology companies.

The Forum is based in Zurich. The Forum's primary mission is to provide the platform for discussion on all aspects of future mobile telecom services. The mandate for UMTS Forum is to be a truly international organisation. It welcomes contacts and the exchange of opinions between companies, governments and other organisations from around the world.

"Our goal is not to make decisions, but to bring together all interested players to set a common direction for the future of mobile telecom - that addresses the legislative, technical, operational and standards aspects of the question. Future policy and strategies will be built on this consensus," comments UMTS Forum Chairman Thomas Beijer, of Swedish mobile operator, Telia Mobitel. Josef Hubert of Siemens and Alan Hadden of One 2 One are vice-chairmen. ■

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

Editorial by
**Thomas Beijer
Telia Mobitel
UMTS Forum Chairman**

CHARTING THE WAY TOWARD THE MOBILE TELEPHONY REVOLUTION

The GSM has brought fundamental changes to the lives of many Europeans, but this is only the very beginning of tomorrow's mobile communications revolution. In the coming years, mobile communications will be the core of a world of new services. These will include mobile-based Internet applications, data transmission and much higher transmission speeds, allowing users to exchange virtually any type of multimedia data through mobile links - from any location. The impact that new mobile communications services will have on how we live and work will be as significant as those created by the introduction of the personal computer, or the more recent advent of electronic mail. Before many of these services become a reality for European citizens, the challenge we face today is to define the future of mobile communications - in terms of service levels, frequency availability, legislation, licensing policy and technical and operational standards.

The Universal Mobile Telecommunications System (UMTS) Forum was created to address this issue. Our goal is to bring together all players and interested organisations - including legislators, the IT industry, telecommunications operators and value-added service providers. Every government or organisation interested in participating in the discussion on the future of mobile telecom services is welcome to participate in the UMTS Forum - with no restrictions on sectoral activity or geographical location. Some observers have asked why we need another telecom forum. Our answer is that we complement the work of organisations such as the ETSI, GSM MoU, CEPT and similar groups - look at issues exclusively from the mobile perspective. The UMTS is dedicated to discussing one main question: what will mobile telecommunications look like in the future? Our mission is not to make decisions, but to recommend and facilitate this discussion between all interested players; to set a direction for the future of mobile services. Based on this common vision, the industry, governments, standards organisations and other players can move forward together in the development of a mobile telecom policy and strategy. We feel that it is important and - far more efficient - to initiate this discussion before the players start working each in their own direction. This new approach to mobile telephony services makes good sense because it is the most efficient way to reach common decisions for the industry. But most importantly, because this is how we can bring new services to the European citizens rapidly and at the lowest possible cost. ■

Mobility versus information bit rates
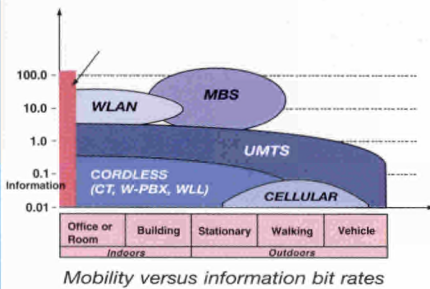
MOBILE COMMUNICATION

The first task the UMTS Forum has set is to define proposals for regulatory involvement by mid-1997 in order to provide stable investment conditions and create proper growth basis for the entire mobile communications industry. Some observers are predicting that if a common industry position can be reached by this time, a proposal can be put before the Council of Ministers and European Parliament rapidly, which could result in the adoption of a Common Position by the end of the year. This may seem rapid by traditional regulatory standards, but it is necessary. The speed with which the market is progressing does not leave more time than this for reflection. With this foundation in place, the next steps that can be completed over the coming years including the freeing of frequencies and the allocation of licenses. This is in line with the Europe's goal of introducing UMTS as a pilot standard to build on GSM functions in 2002, and as a large-scale commercial effort by 2005.

On the operational side, several EU technical programmes and many demonstration projects are currently underway. Their goal is simple: to enable users to communicate any type of information, using any type of tool from any location to any other location. This may sound far-reaching, but full, mass market mobile communication services require nothing less than total flexibility for the user - the highest technology in an easy-to-use package. The ACTS Programme currently addresses three interrelated aspects of mobile communications namely: services, systems, and technologies. Two separate but related platforms with both terrestrial and space components, namely UMTS and MBS/WLAN (Mobile Broadband Systems/Wireless Local Area Networks). form the basis of the R&D work. UMTS aims at supporting all services, facilities and applications currently running on today's second generation mobile systems while accommodating, broadband multimedia services and applications particularly in high mobility environments with quality levels commensurate to those of the fixed networks, as well as in wireless local loop applications.

In the area of MBS/WLAN, the R&D work relates to technologies and networks and addresses the provision of advanced broadband services and applications in low mobility environments. The driving forces behind this need are the growing use of laptop computers, wide acceptance of work mobility, and the potential cost savings in avoiding the wiring or re-wiring of buildings particularly in the case of wireless local area networks. Application areas include mobile systems for offices, industrial automation, financial services, emergency and medical systems, education and training, with network connections for portable computers. All this coordinated activity clearly says one thing: that foundations exist for innovative mobile services to take off today. And just as soon as the legal and operational elements are in place, the sky's the limit - for consumers providers and operators across Europe. ∎

For more information contact ACTS Central Office:
e-mail: aco@postman.dg13.cec.be   http://www.infowin.org

NEW PROGRAMME PROPOSED BY COMMISSION TO DRIVE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

Special focus on awareness raising activities; demonstration projects; links with third countries.

A multi-annual programme proposed by the European Commission in December will allocate 45 MECU - between 1997 and 2001 - to drive forward the development of the Information Society in Europe.

To ensure that news of the importance of the Information Society reaches as many European citizens and companies as possible, the programme will focus on three key priorities: increasing public awareness, supporting the establishment of the Information Society and taking into account the global dimension of the Information Society. The core of the programme will be the funding of a series of demonstration projects, which bring together partners from commercial companies and organisations across the EU, to create new products and services and to demonstrate the potential of the Information Society.

The starting point for this work will be the creation of an 'inventory' of all international, European and national projects related to the Information Society. Barriers to the proper functioning of the single market in the Information Society shall also be identified.

The programme aims to complement already existing instruments at national or EU level (e.g. R&D programmes, TENs, standardisation policy, support of information content). ∎

More information on this programme can be obtained at:
http://www.ispo.cec.be/infosoc/press/ip961171.html
or by contacting the ISPO secretariat (see page 4)

HIGH-LEVEL INDUSTRY ADVISORY GROUP

The High-level Industry Advisory Group has been set up by the European Commission on the initiative of Commissioner Bangemann to allow European industry to provide its input to the development of the European Union's Information Society policy.

The Group members are 30 top executives of industry sectors which are concerned by the rapid emergence of the information society-related market. These include representatives of telecommunications operators and equipment manufacturers, the computer hardware and software industry, electronics groups, publishers, broadcasters and audiovisual content providers.

Three working groups were set up. On the basis of their work a short document containing a limited number of key recommendations for actions to be submitted to the attention of EU Member State governments and the European Commission as well as outlining proposals for industrial initiatives has been produced. This document was finalised at the plenary meeting of the Group on 9 January 1997 in Berlin. The recommendations are to be implemented either by governments or industry, or on the basis of private-public partnerships and address the following issues:

1. Telecommunication liberalisation
2. Education and training
3. Electronic commerce
4. Convergence
5. Public Administrations
6. Standardisation
7. Globalisation
8. SMEs
9. Research and development (R&D)
10. Satellites
11. Awareness building. ∎

STANDARDISATION

PROFILE: ISIS INITIATIVE

INFORMATION SOCIETY INITIATIVE FOR STANDARDISATION

ISIS is the Information Society Initiative in support of Standardisation. It offers funding to support projects that contribute to the creation or reinforcement of standards that support the Information Society.

The projects selected focus on the application, validation, or demonstration of standards in domains of high economic and social impact. Each project receives 50% co-funding, and must be multinational-consortium-based projects. Funding is subject to annual review. It has run at the level of 4.2 MECU in 1995 and 4.1 MECU for 1996.

In the selection of projects, special attention is paid to identifying user requirements for standards and/or the acceptance of new draft standards, as well as contributing to interoperability and validation of critical interfaces necessary for the proper interworking of services and applications.

Secondary objectives are targeted promotion and awareness building of the possibilities offered by the use of standards in the specified domains.

In 1995, six projects were launched, covering the areas of Bioinformatics; High-Performance Computing; Multimedia, Digital City applications; and Regional SME Electronic Commerce networks. In 1996, nine projects were launched in the areas of: Electronic Commerce; Multimedia systems; Teleworking; and Healthcare networks. A further Call is expected for second half of 1997 leading to more projects starting in 1998. ■

For more information on this initiative contact: Simon Smith, DG III/B/3, e-mail: Simon.Smith@cec.be Fax: +32 2 2991675

BANGEMANN CHALLENGE

AND THE WINNERS ARE....

BANGEMANN CHALLENGE: SWEDEN'S MONARCH CROWNS EUROPE'S IT KINGS

Stockholm, January 22, 1997 was the moment of truth for cities across Europe that participated in the Bangemann Challenge. One year ago, the city of Stockholm challenged its counterparts - cities of more than 400,000 inhabitants across Europe - to put their best Information Society products and services forward.

Some 25 cities did, presenting 110 projects - and on January 22, His Majesty the King of Sweden awarded prizes to the nine European cities that created the 16 winning projects. These were selected by an international jury. Dr. Martin Bangemann, the EU Commissioner responsible for information technology and telecommunications, has served as its honorary chairman and Mr. Jörg Wenzel, head of the European Commission's Information Society Activity Centre, has served as executive chairman.

The winners are:

Stockholm: Sofia Distance (Distance Learning); Bedside (Healthcare) and STELHA (Electronic Tendering); and a Special Mention for Flex-Live, a teleworking project initiated by Siemens-Nixdorf's Swedish subsidiary.

Edinburgh: EaStMAN (University Networks); MAMS (Healthcare), and the Craigmillar Community Information Service (City Information Highways).

Antwerp: SMART (Distance Learning); EDIGO/SEAGHA (Telematics for SMEs), and MANAP (City Information Highways).

Manchester: the Manchester Multimedia Network (Telematics for SMEs) and the Electronic Village Hall Network (Public Administration).

Barcelona: Virtual Campus, a distance learning project.

Bologna: IPERBOLE (Public Administration).

Paris/Ile De France: The Neighbourhood Offices Network teleworking project.

Rotterdam: for its TeleRing project in Road Traffic Management.

Bremen won an award for its Value-Added Network air traffic control network .

Commenting on the achievement, Mats Hulth - Mayor of Stockholm and one of the Challenge's initiators - commented that these results are a very good illustration of Europe's diversity of IT development. "Six European countries are among the world's 10 leading IT nations; this is very positive," he said.

We will be highlighting the winning projects in upcoming issues of IS News. ■

For full details, see the Bangemann Challenge web site.
http://www.stockholm.se/bm
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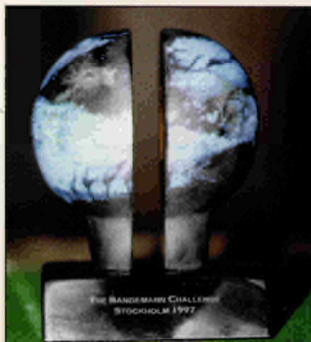
G7 PILOT PROJECTS

ELECTRONIC BUSINESS AND THE SME

G7 CONFERENCE: GLOBAL MARKETPLACE FOR SMEs: BONN, 7-9 APRIL 1997

What is electronic commerce? How can my business profit from it; and how will it affect my business? If you are a businessperson running a Small or Medium-sized Enterprise in Europe or a policy maker - the G7 Global Marketplace for SMEs Conference is a meeting not to be missed.

Here, you will have precise answers to your questions about electronic commerce, and the opportunity to meet like-minded business professionals, potential partners and policy makers.

The Global Marketplace for SMEs conference will focus on three key topics:

- Electronic commerce for SMEs in the Information Society: the impact that electronic commerce will have on our lives as consumers, employees, and citizens
- Building the global marketplace: the products, services and technologies needed for effective electronic commerce and the issues involved in using them - for example payments, trust and security systems, multilingual features, commercial law, training, etc.
- Electronic commerce at work: real-life business cases and practical experiences with electronic commerce. Examples from many sectors, including the car industry, textiles, food, construction, publishing, financial services, tourism, business information, etc.

This initiative is organised by the European Commission on behalf of the G7 in a joint effort with the German Ministry of Economic Affairs and the City of Bonn/Telebonn. Conference participation is 250 ECUs. ■

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INFORMATION SOCIETY NEWS

GIP global inventory project

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G7 PILOT PROJECTS

THE GLOBAL INVENTORY PROJECT PLANS AWARENESS DAYS

The Global Inventory Project (GIP), one of the eleven Pilot Projects launched at the G7 Ministerial Conference in Brussels in February 1995, is planning to hold information days in 9 countries.

The actions have been identified with the objective to promote the participation of non-G7 countries in the GIP, create awareness of the functionalities of the GIP system and its relevance to the development of Information Society and as a tool for the free exchange of information as well as fostering international investments through its brokerage function.

The one-day events will take place in countries as follows:
Denmark, Copenhagen, March 3, 1997
Czech Republic, Prague, March 8
Spain, Madrid, March 18
Bulgaria, Sofia, April 3
Egypt, Cairo, April 15
Hungary, Budapest, April 25
Israel, Tel Aviv, May 5,
Turkey, Istanbul, May 10
Poland, Warsaw, May 30
These on-site events will be accompanied by an extensive on line promotional campaign. ∎

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IDA

IDA — "CALL FOR IDEAS" AND WORKSHOP

The first phase of the IDA programme (Interchange of Data between Administrations - 1993-97) is coming to an end, and the programme is now preparing its future. To help define how the IDA programme can help Europe's public administrations, IDA has sent out a "Call for Ideas", whose aim is to gather information on priority projects which will implement telematics networks and services more efficiently. The results of the survey will be taken into account in IDA's future workprogramme.

All contributions are welcome, and any person or organization wishing to participate in this "Call for Ideas" is requested to fill in

the electronic form on the IDA Web Site.
(www.ispo.cec.be/ida/ida.html)
IDA is holding a two-day workshop on 27 and 28 February in Brussels (Palace Hotel).

It will be made up of addresses, a series of case studies and working sessions, and will bring together specialists from Member States public administrations, the European Institutions and from the Telematics and Information Technology industries.

The programme will review the most recent achievements of the IDA Programme, highlight areas where work still needs to be done, and set out the strategy through which IDA and public administrations will work together in the coming decade. ∎

CALENDAR

Internet and Politics
Munich (DE)
19-21 February 1997
Academy of the Third Millenium
Tel: +49 89 92502300
Fax: +49 89 92503464
e-mail:
100656.1315@compuserve.com

Training of Teachers in Educational Multimedia Workshop under the Info 2000 programme Luxembourg
24-25 February 1997
Fax: +39 51 235890
e-mail: Pier Giacomo Sola: pgs@bologna.nettuno.it
INFO2000 Central Office,
Marc Willem: mwillem@echo.lu
http://www2.echo.lu/info2000/en/ sch-seminar.html

G7 pilot project: A Global Marketplace for SMEs First annual conference
Bonn (DE)
7-9 April 1997
D3 Group c/o Empirica GmbH
Tel: +49 228 985300
Fax: +49 228 9853012
e-mail: Info@G7EC.DE
http://www.G7EC.DE

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

Stockholm IT Week
Stockholm (SE)
26-30 May 1997
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EEMA '97
Electronic Commerce and Messaging in Europe
Maastricht (NL)
15-18 June 1997
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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
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