GOOD HEALTH: G7 PROPOSES 'IS' PILOT PROJECTS

While the number of Internet services and the Information Society continue to grow at a phenomenal rate, many citizens do not yet realise how these new tools will affect - or are already changing - their everyday lives. Recognising this gap, the Ministers of Industry and Telecommun-ications of the G7 countries took a decisive step forward during their Brussels meeting in February 1995. Through an Information Society 'Showcase', they allowed European citizens to see, touch and use new inform-ation services that will soon be used at home, school, in the office and in factories and hospitals. The positive response received from people that visited this demonstration, encouraged the G-7 Govern-ments to create a series of pilot projects in a number of selected areas. The Healthcare sector projects give some interesting examples of the new information services that will be available in the near future.

Towards a Global Public Health Network

This project aims to assist public health authorities in their fight against infectious diseases or major health hazards. It is investigating the feasibility of linking exist-ing and emerging public health data telematic networks in Canada, Europe, Japan, the USA, the World Health Organisation, as well as other international health-related organisations.

Improving prevention, early detection and treatment of cancer

This project is designed to help health professionals increase the efficiency of epidemiological and clinical studies. The action will establish multimedia databases which will enable health professionals across the world to seek decisional support for patient management and referral.

Improving the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of major cardiovascular diseases

This project will bring patients rapid access to the best cardiovascular specialists, through a direct multimedia link.

This is the first step in creating a 'a stratified model' of care for cardiovascular diseases. Centres of Excellence will be identified to provide tele-consultation services and access to multimedia databases.

A 24-hour multilingual telemedicine surveillan-ce and emergency system around the world

The creation of a global 'tele-consultation' system for health emergencies. A telematic network, linking major public and private emergency centres, and other relevant supporting medical institutions around the world, will provide a 24-hour multilingual emergency teleconsultation service.

Enabling mechanisms for global healthcare network

Nomenclature, coding and standards are the focus of this project. It aims to identify the most efficient tools and communication infrastructure for accessing and navigating the networks.

International harmonisation of data cards for healthcare

This project is the pilot for an inter-national health card to provide medical information, vital in an emergency. It will also pilot an international professional card - essential for the secure identification of healthcare professionals accessing medical records and using network services.

PROGRESS REPORT

The initial team of nominated govern-mental representatives and technical experts from the G-7 countries has now been expanded to include several observers from other non-G7 countries (Australia, Greece, Ireland, Korea, Sweden and the Netherlands). Also the interest of several industrial partners and private and public associations has been raised, both at the global level and at the level of individual sub-projects. The G-7 National Coordinators have also indicated the willingness of a stronger commitment of their respective countries in the overall G-7 action and discussed joint actions to promote a coordinated implementation of the current pilot projects. New proposals have also been made for additional G-7 sub-projects in the healthcare sector, whose terms of reference are currently under preparation. At the beginning of 1996 technical feasibility studies have been launched with the financial support of the European Commis-sion and their preliminary conclusions have recently been evaluated by independent technical experts. For all projects the feasibility phase will end in July 1997. A final evaluation will take place in October of the same year. The G7 Coordinators can then agree about the projects going into the pilot implementation phase. ■

More information on the G7 Pilot Projects is available at:
http://www.ispo.cec.be/G7/projidx.html

ELECTRONIC CULTURE'S DELICATE BALANCE

The question of 'electronic culture' is part of any discussion on the Information Society (IS). Some say that we have reached the moment where all cultural works will have direct access to the people - and vice versa. Sceptics prefer the theme of a global mass media culture that will erase all but the most popular forms of 'mass culture'. The truth lies somewhere in between. The power of instant communication - for artists, styles, new projects or older works - has the potential to bring culture closer to the masses. More importantly these new information tools give artists and cultural organisations the possibility to grasp the interest of new segments of the public. To reach this goal, the challenge is to use the Internet and related channels to talk to each person rather than to all the people. If we can achieve this we will create a true revolution. There is a direct correlation between the circulation of images and love for arts. It is because people know that a museum exists that they visit it. This prompts the question: does this mean that the information/commun-ications revolution will create new knowledge? We do not believe that cultural knowledge will be more complete as a result of the IS. But as information about culture is easily and rapidly accessible more people will be exposed to cultural creations. A risk to avoid is that works of art are reduced to bibliographic data. The tools of the IS are there to present the public with a first glimpse of various aspects of our artistic and cultural heritage. But it should serve to 'point' people toward museums and exhibitions - not as an art substitute. Providing cultural information in this way poses delicate questions. Will the broadcasting of culture in this way create an anti-technology backlash? Even though the Internet is still in its infancy, we already have a glimpse of how the global village can address culture. One reality is the world of 'pay-per-view' television. It is predicted that by 2020 over one billion people will be connected to global information networks; this means that some 8 or 9 billion people may be excluded from the information revolution. As in other areas of society the cultural sector must also take great care not to create a two-tier society, where only a portion of the public has access to new cultural information. The Information Society has the unique possibility to bring culture to a new and varied population. In designing the cultural information revolution of tomorrow, we must ask ourselves the key question: how can we bring culture to the masses, without making it a mass media. ■

COUNTDOWN 98

EU 'REALITY CHECK' SHOWS ALL COUNTRIES ON TRACK FOR TELECOM DEREGULATION

With full liberalisation of the 200 billion ECU telecom market of the European Union set for 1 January 1998, the Commission wants to ensure that Member States are fulfilling their obligations under European Union law and the World Trade Organisation agreement on basic telecommunications services. The overall results of the Commission's recent review show that the liberalisation process is on track in all countries.
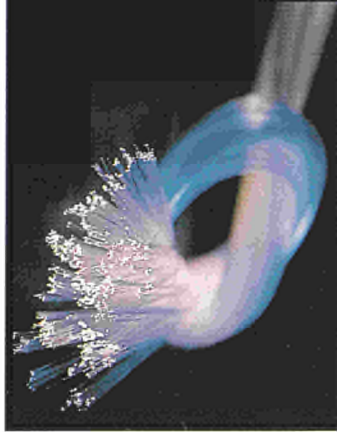
As the clock ticks toward 1998 and Day 1 of Europe's deregulated telecom market, the European Commission approved the progress report on the state of implementation of the telecom deregulation package. The picture that emerges from this reality check is broadly encouraging. A significant number of Member States have either transposed the entire telecom deregulation package into their local legislation, or can be expected to complete the transition by end 1997. In a further group of countries, the main principles will be transposed on time, although the necessary secondary legislation may still need to be adopted. The assessment given in the report presented by Martin Bangemann and Karel van Miert - the European Commissioners responsible for Europe's telecom regulation - charts the extent to which these measures have been transposed into law in all Member States. As some of the deadlines in this package have not been enacted into law, the evaluation process will continue until end-1997, and beyond for some Member States that have been

granted a longer period to implement the measures. The meeting of the Telecom-munications Council held in Luxembourg on 27 June underlined these developments and invited the European Commission to follow up on the progress achieved. Commissioners Bangemann and Van Miert announced further meetings with the Member States to ensure the full implementation of the necessary legislation.

In the next stage of this evaluation process, the Commission will focus on how the European telecom market is operating - by checking that the new measures are being correctly applied in all countries. EU competition directives allow an extended implementation period for Member States with less-developed or very small networks. The Commission has granted extensions to Greece, Ireland, Luxembourg, Portugal and Spain. The Commission has also identified a number of further practical criteria that offer solid proof of real progress toward full telecom liberalisation. These include progress by Member States in ensuring that users have a simple way to choose between different long-distance and international carriers, that they can keep their numbers when changing to a different phone company and that competing operators can get fair access to the local lines into homes and businesses which belong to today's operators.

For all Member States, a considerable effort now lies ahead, to ensure that the national rules are applied in the market-place. Until full deregulation has been achieved, the Commission will continue to track progress in all these areas. ■

The full text of the communication is available at: http://www.ispo.cec.be/infosoc/legreg/docs/97236.html

EVENTS UPDATE

TELEWORK WILL HIT THE HEADLINES IN THE THIRD EUROPEAN TELEWORK WEEK

People interested in new ways of working will come together to exchange views, discuss innovations - and most importantly to demonstrate the benefit of telework to non-practitioners - at the Third European Telework Week (3-10 November 1997). This event is jointly organised by European Commission DG XIII, in partnership with industry and the EU-funded European Telework Development project. Readers thinking that this article has forgotten to mention the venue for this event are mistaken. In the true teleworking sprit, the Telework Week will be held simultaneously in 50 separate events across Europe and linked with the tools of the trade - video links; Internet www activity etc. These include national conferences, local and regional seminars, open

days, media involvement and on-line and interactive events.

A new feature of this year's event is the first European Telework Awards. These will be awarded to people and organisations that have significantly contributed to the development of Telework in Europe. The awards will be presented to the winners at the Award Ceremony, in Brussels on November 7, hosted by the Belgian Telework Association.

Awards will be given in five areas:

- Best contribution to European competitiveness
- Most original telework scheme
- Best contribution to sustainability
- Best technological contribution to the advancement of telework.
- Best media coverage of telework. ■

If you or your organisation has made an outstanding achievement in teleworking; or if you would like to link your event to the Telework Week, point your browser to: http://www.eto.org.uk/etw97/

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Tel: +32 75 683473
Fax: +32 2 6532484
e-mail: etw-info@eto.org.uk

WITHOUT THE RIGHT INFRASTRUCTURE THERE CAN BE NO INFORMATION SOCIETY

Without a well conceived, flexible and above all expandable telecom infra-structure, the Information Society cannot thrive. This was the conclusion of a special high-level conference, "21st Century - The Communications Age", that was recently held in Brussels. At this meeting - which was convened by the European Commission and Parliament - legislators and members of the worldwide Information Technology industry presented their views on future commun-ications infrastructure requirements. The audience represented a cross-section of European decision makers - Members

of the European Parliament, senior European Com-mission officials, repres-entatives from EU Member States, major industrialists and user associations. What is at stake, they concluded, is no less than the economic and competitive future of Europe. The main priorities and areas for action were stressed by a panel of high-level speakers, including Robert Verrue, Director-General EC DG XIII; Umberto Scapagnini, Chairman of the European Parliament Committee on Research; Technological Development and Energy; Margareta Winberg, Swedish Minister of Labour; Pierre Laffitte, French Senator for Alpes Maritime; Peter Cochrane, Director of BT Research; and Jim Clarke, Chairman of Netscape Commun-ications. This meeting was one of the highlights in a

CREATING A EUROPEAN-STYLE INFORMATION SOCIETY

'IS' MUST PLACE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ASPECTS ON THE SAME LEVEL

Europe should strive to create a European-style Information Society which embraces the economic changes and innovations that these new technologies bring, but which also pays careful attention to provide social guarantees to citizens. This is the recommendation of the High Level Experts Group, in their report 'Building a European Information Society for us all', which was welcomed by Padraig Flynn, European Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs. The High Level Experts Group is an advisory body set up by the Commission and composed of fourteen renowned independent experts. The report is a contribution to the process initiated by the European Commission's Green Paper 'Living and Working in the Information Society: People First' which was launched at the Information Society colloquium in Dublin in September 1996, under the Irish Presidency. The High Level Experts Group

recommends a socially inclusive Information Society and proposes the creation of a "broad policy framework to help build an Information Society that improves quality of life for all Europeans". The report contains more than thirty core suggestions for policy development, ranging from economic matters, such as employment policy and regional cohesion, to social aspects, such as quality of life, social cohesion, health and democracy. "The European model for the Information Society should have a strong element of solidarity, and include all aspects of a broader social - not just industrial and economic - view of technological change," say the report's conclusions. It says that there is an urgent need to coordinate policies aimed at enhancing job growth potential of the Information Society, and to make rapid progress towards establishing common minimum European social standards to create a level playing field in the social sphere. ■

For a full copy of the final report, point your browser to: http://www.ispo.cec.be/hleg/hleg.html

week of inter-linked conferences held in several parts of the world. The result was the world's biggest demonstration in the use of advanced communications technologies. The Brussels conference shared sessions with a communications school in Moscow; a Network Interoperability Conference in Madeira; and the Global Networking '97 conference in Calgary (Canada). A further nine countries established specific venues to monitor the proceedings through a 'Global 360' network. These shared sessions were broadcast to a worldwide audience through a high-speed internet link. ■

For more information on the results of the conference, contact:
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BELGIUM'S SMES WARM UP TO ELECTRONIC COMMERCE

More than 1,500 managers of small and medium-sized companies (SMEs) in Belgium saw how electronic commerce can help them to do business more efficiently, thanks to a series of roadshows organised by Fabrimetal, the Belgian metals industry federation and local chambers of commerce. Presentations were organised at 29 different locations across the country. Each 90-minute presentation featured models of companies using Internet-based electronic commerce and networking between SMEs to open new business opportunities. ■

For more details, point your browser to European Commission's Electronic Commerce pages: http://www.ispo.cec.be/Ecommerce or contact Marjolein van Bodegem, DG III Industry Tel: +32 2 2968159 Fax: +32 2 2968387 e-mail: marjolein.vanbodegem@dg3.cec.be

A PROMISE OF SMOOTHER TRAFFIC

Transport telematics help reduce congestion, accidents and pollution.

Who says cars and computers don't go together? The PROMISE transport telematics project clearly shows how better quality information can reduce accident levels, traffic congestion and pollution caused by increasing road traffic volumes. This project, which is a partnership between the European telecommunications and automotive industries, pledges to provide real-time traffic information to drivers and road management authorities - at any place, at any time. The project leader is Nokia, the Finnish mobile telecom company, and project partners are BMW, British Telecom, France Télécom, Renault and Volvo. PROMISE is co-funded by the European Union's Telematic Applications Programme, which provides funds of ECU 2.3 million of its ECU 6 million total.

For the user the PROMISE services mean less frustration on the road, and less needless waiting in traffic, says project manager, Tommi Ojala, of Nokia Finland. "Telematics provide users with dynamic traffic information, allowing them to choose different routes or even another mode of transportation, depending on the situation." When completed, PROMISE will provide a multilingual service that is accessible across Europe over GSM mobile telecom networks through a portable information unit located in each driver's car. PROMISE will be the Europe-wide technical platform on which all types of user services can be offered.

To ensure a maximum of technical transparency, the project team paid special attention to using existing standard technologies and technical platforms. Peter Decker, project coordinator from Nokia Germany explains: "All services are based on already standardised and widely used protocols and systems such as GSM and the Internet. This open approach allows for a fast and

easy introduction of the service - in practical terms for users."

Key features of PROMISE are its 'journey planning' and an 'on-journey guidance' functions, which consult real-time information from traffic and geographical information databases to give drivers information about traffic conditions, suggested itineraries, etc. Other services include general information for travellers, on weather and road conditions, points of interest and a 'yellow pages' function. It also provides access to hotel and train reservation services. Over and above traveller convenience, PROMISE brings the advantage of improved safety and a positive impact on the environment, through reduced road congestion.

"PROMISE will help spread traffic more evenly during the day so that transport infrastructures can be used more efficiently. In situations where bad weather or difficult traffic conditions can be predicted, the system will help reduce the risk of accidents" comments Decker.

The outlook for commercialisation is good as there is a clear demand for telematic devices that can effectively contribute to facilitating journeys. Europe's national and regional and city authorities are now becoming aware of the benefits that transport telematics bring in terms of safety and quality of life for citizens. Substantial investments by these authorities are forthcoming across Europe. ■

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INFORMATION SOCIETY NEWS

ISPO CORNER

A NORTH/SOUTH DIALOGUE BETWEEN WOMEN

The European Women's Dialogue project has created electronic links between women from the South and North, to encourage them to share ideas on information strategies for women's organisations. The primary objective of this effort is to help women and women's organisations become familiar with the benefits of the Information Society, while using these services as a part of their everyday work. Using a series of electronic 'bulletin boards', that are a linked to an Internet Web page, women and women's organisations can post messages and requests for contacts, and search for information. As the project

reaches its mid-term evaluation, the main conclusion reached to date is that there is still a huge discrepancy in the use and access to Internet between the Northern and Southern countries in the EU. Through projects like the European Women's Dialogue, this information gap should be rapidly reduced, as more women and women's organisations turn to on-line access to look for information and contacts. ■

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Fax: +32 2 2198451
e-mail:
eurowomen-lobby@enter.org
http://www.womenlobby.org/dial
ogue.htm

FIRST FIGURES ON ISPO CALL FOR PROPOSALS

The first statistics have been released concerning the Call for proposals for feasibility studies, demonstration actions, and accompanying measures in the area of Information Society (OJ C148 of 16/5/97 - see *IS News N°12*). A total of 293 proposals

were submitted of which 269 were found eligible (Demonstration actions 132, Studies 17, Accompanying measures 120). Evaluation of the proposals is expected to be completed by the end of July. The total available budget for the call is about 6 MECUs. All organisations that submitted proposals will be informed of the decision in October. ■

EVENTS UPDATE

EUROPEAN IT CONFERENCE

Convergence: creating the future
Brussels, November 24-26

The convergence of telecommunications, broadcasting, Information Technology and publishing is the topic of the European IT Conference & Exhibition, set for 24-26 November at the Brussels Congress Centre. Some of the event's highlights include:
- Keynote speeches by Nicholas Negroponte, the Director of the MIT Media Laboratory.
- Overview of the IS Technologies part of the EU's upcoming Fifth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development.

- Workshops and mini-conferences on topics such as Future and Emerging Technologies, Research Networks, Multimedia Content, Mobility, the Web, and Electronic Commerce.
- Presentations of leading edge technologies and products that have grown out of Esprit.
- The European IT Prize finalists.
- The IT Investment Forum, will introduce IT innovators looking for venture capital, and a intensive tutorial on What Venture Capitalists Expect - and What They Actually Get. ■

For the latest information on the conference, point your browser to:http://www.cordis.lu/esprit/src/eitc97.htm

CALENDAR

11th European Conference of the International Association of Science Parks
Madeira (PT)
18-19 September 1997
Tel: +351 91 741253
Fax: +351 91 741293
e-mail: oto@dragoeiro.uma.pt

Role of Universities in the Future Information Society
Prague (CZ)
24-27 September
Karel Kveton
Tel: +42 2 24310369
Fax: +42 2 3117529
e-mail: rufis-call@mail.vc.cvut.cz
http://www.cvut.cz/cp1250/cc/icsc/NII/index.html

Public Electronic Trade and Commerce '97
Stockholm (S)
1-2 October
Swedish Local Authorities
Sara Goldberger
Tel: +46 8 7724224
Fax: +46 8 7724352
e-mail: sara.goldberger@svekom.se

Building the Global Information Society for the 21st Century
Brussels (B)
1-3 October 1997
EC DG III - Industry
with the support of CEN/EWOS
Tel: +32 2 5117455
Fax: +32 2 5118723
e-mail: glstdconf@dg3.cec.be
http://www.ispo.cec.be/standards/conf97

Online Educa Berlin
International conference on technology in distance learning
Berlin (DE)
29-31 October
ICEF
Fax: +49 30 3249833
e-mail: 100770.3137@compuserve.com

European IT Conference & Exhibition EITC 97
Brussels (B)
24-26 November
EC DG III - ESPRIT
Fax: +32 2 2991926
e-mail: eitc97@dg3.cec.be
http://www.cordis.lu/esprit/src/eitc97.htm

3rd European digital Cities Conference
Berlin (D)
1-2 December 1997
Eric Mino
EDC project coordination office
Fax: +32 2 5520889
e-mail: telecities@mcr1.poptel.org.uk
http://www.edc.eu.int

ISPO SECRETARIAT

Free phone service

Austria	0660 5835
Belgium	0800 13891
Denmark	800 1 8888
Finland	0800 113635
France	0800 91 7227
Germany	0130 821943
Greece	00800 3212635
Ireland	1800 553224
Italy	1678 76790
Luxembourg	0800 2929
Netherlands	060 222086
Portugal	0505 329635
Spain	900 993290
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