

## COUNCIL RESOLUTION

of 25 March 2002

### on the eEurope Action Plan 2002: accessibility of public websites and their content

(2002/C 86/02)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

during the year 2003, the European Year of Disabled People.

Having regard to the eEurope 2002 Action Plan adopted by the Santa Maria da Feira European Council in June 2000 to enable all citizens to participate in the opportunities provided by the Information Society,

(4) The Transport/Telecommunications Council of 15 October 2001 took note of the Commission communication.

Whereas

(1) The Commission, in its communication of 25 September 2001, focused on one of the specific objectives of the eEurope Action Plan 2002: improving access to the Web for the 37 million people with disabilities in Europe and for the growing number of older persons, who may be unable to access the information and services offered by the new media.

(5) The Employment and Social Policy Council of 8 October 2001 adopted a resolution on e-inclusion — exploiting the opportunities of the Information Society for social inclusion.

(2) The Web Accessibility Initiative by the World Wide Web Consortium has developed a series of guidelines including the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines <sup>(1)</sup> (hereinafter referred to as 'the Guidelines') which have become a de facto standard used worldwide for the creation of accessible websites.

(6) The conclusions drawn up by the Presidency regarding the results of the informal conference on new technologies and disability, which was held in Madrid on 6 and 7 February 2002, stressed *inter alia*, the need for measures to encourage web accessibility in the Union.

(3) The abovementioned Commission communication draws, *inter alia*, the following conclusions:

Bearing in mind:

— national administrations should seek constantly to improve the accessibility of their web pages and explore new and better ways to deliver web content and services as new technologies and new versions of the Guidelines are developed,

(1) the European objective to integrate everyone, particularly people with disabilities and older people into the information society, as expressed in the eEurope 2002 Action Plan;

— the eEurope website will present the progress towards adoption and implementation of the Guidelines by the European Institutions and the Member States,

(2) that lack of accessibility to the new communication media is a major obstacle to be removed if progress is to be made towards participation by everyone in the Information Society;

— measures for awareness-raising, dissemination, education and especially training in Web accessibility should be promoted in both the European institutions and the Member States,

(3) that there are examples of good practice in some Member States as regards training and support for those responsible for web pages and awareness-raising for information officers and managers, as well as for content creators, regarding the Guidelines and their objectives;

— within the framework of the eEurope Action Plan, Member States should encourage not only national public websites but also local and regional public websites to comply with the Guidelines,

(4) that, though progress has been made by the Member States regarding the specific eEurope Action of adopting the Guidelines, work should continue on the implementation of those Guidelines in order to achieve the underlying eEurope objective of ensuring that all public websites are accessible;

— there should be a major initiative devoted to achieving overall accessibility of both public and private websites

(5) that accessibility to the Web is an integral part of public information policy in some countries within and outside the Union and, in such cases, legislation or other policy instruments can provide valuable incentives for websites to be accessible;

<sup>(1)</sup> [Http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/](http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG10/)

(6) that technological progress is making it easier to implement the Guidelines and to validate the compliance of websites with the Guidelines.

Therefore:

1. STRESSES the need to increase efforts to speed up accessibility to the Web and the content it offers;
2. ENCOURAGES the Member States to implement specific and adequately-resourced measures to achieve the underlying objective of the eEurope 2002 Action Plan for accessibility of public websites at all levels of government;
3. INVITES the High Level Group on the Employment and Social Dimension of the Information Society (ESDIS) to monitor progress in the adoption and implementation of the Guidelines and to develop common methodologies

and comparable data so as to facilitate the evaluation of progress;

4. ENCOURAGES the Member States and the Commission to take account of the need for digital content to be accessible, for example by, when funding development of websites, requiring those websites to implement the Guidelines;
5. CALLS on the Member States and the Commission to participate in the European Year of People with Disabilities in 2003 and to improve Web accessibility, awareness and training, and on the Commission to submit in the first half of 2004 a report giving an overview of progress made;
6. URGES the Member States and the Commission to further develop a permanent dialogue with representative organisations of people with disabilities and organisations representing older persons, so that their reactions to these matters may be taken into account.

## COUNCIL RESOLUTION

### on the follow-up to the Green Paper on corporate social responsibility

(2002/C 86/03)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING:

1. The appeal made by the European Council in Lisbon to companies' corporate sense of social responsibility regarding best practices on lifelong learning, work organisation, equal opportunities, social inclusion and sustainable development.
2. The request made by the European Council in Nice, as part of the implementation of the European social agenda, to support initiatives relating to corporate social responsibility and the management of change by means of a Commission communication and, for the purpose of fighting poverty and all forms of exclusion and discrimination in order to promote social integration, to establish the conditions for an efficient partnership with the social partners, non-governmental organisations, local authorities and bodies that manage social services, and to involve undertakings in that partnership in order to strengthen their social responsibility.
3. The favourable reception given by the European Council in Stockholm to initiatives taken by businesses to encourage corporate social responsibility.

4. The Commission Green Paper on promoting a European framework for corporate social responsibility (COM(2001) 366), which launches a consultation on corporate social responsibility.

5. The Commission communications on quality, core labour standards and governance <sup>(1)</sup>,

CONVINCED that, corporate social responsibility can contribute to objectives such as those defined in the Green Paper, and in particular those:

6. of the Lisbon summit: 'to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion';
7. of the European employment and social inclusion strategy, and the elements aimed at anticipating and benefiting from change in accordance with the social agenda approved at Nice;

<sup>(1)</sup> 'Employment and social policies: a framework for investing in quality' (COM(2001) 313) and 'Promoting core labour standards and improving social governance in the context of globalisation' (COM(2001) 416).