

Tuesday, 14 March 2006

35. Underlines, further, the importance of the EU cooperating with the main mining countries, Algeria and Kyrgyzstan, with a view to phasing out the primary mercury entering the world market, by supporting relevant actions;
36. Stresses the importance of the EU taking the initiative and organising bilateral meetings with other regions, such as the G77 and China, in order better to prepare the negotiations scheduled to take place during the upcoming UNEP Governing Council in 2007;
37. Asks the Commission to explore the possibility of providing technical assistance and know-how to affected developing countries and countries with economies in transition to eventually phase out uses and releases of mercury and mercury compounds;
38. Stresses that, in addition, the use of amalgam in Second- and Third-World countries must be reduced;
39. Asks the Commission, considering the above, to request Member States to report on all of their activities and projects on mercury involving developing countries, with a view to determining where the needs are for more efficient use of EU funds;
40. Calls on the Commission to ensure restriction in the use of mercury in gold mining, by promoting at the same time non-mercury-using viable techniques, and furthermore to come forward with a proposal for a positive labelling scheme for gold that has been mined without the use of mercury, covering gold processed both inside and outside the European Union;
41. Reminds the Commission of its own statement that the Medical Devices Expert Group 'comprises "stakeholders" to assist the Commission on questions arising from the implementation and practical application' of Council Directive 90/385/EEC of 20 June 1990 on the approximation of the laws of the Member States relating to active implantable medical devices ⁽¹⁾; therefore considers it extremely important, to ensure full participation of all stakeholders, such as health care professionals, toxicologists and experts in clinical environmental medicine, patient groups and public health groups in the Medical Devices Expert Group, and to ensure a balanced representation of the different views;
42. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 189, 20.7.1990, p. 17.

P6_TA(2006)0079

A European information society for growth and employment

European Parliament resolution on a European information society for growth and employment (2005/2167(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Commission Communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled 'i2010 — A European Information Society for growth and employment' (COM(2005)0229) and the accompanying Commission Staff Working Paper on extended impact assessment (SEC(2005)0717),
- having regard to Directive 2002/21/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 March 2002 on a common regulatory framework for electronic communications networks and services (Framework Directive) ⁽¹⁾,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 108, 24.4.2002, p. 33.

Tuesday, 14 March 2006

- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 460/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 March 2004 establishing the European Network and Information Security Agency ⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to the Commission Communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled 'eAccessibility' (COM(2005)0425),
 - having regard to the Digital Divide Forum Report of 15 July 2005 on broadband access and public support in under-served areas,
 - having regard to the Commission Communication to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled 'A market-based approach to spectrum management in the European Union' (COM(2005)0400),
 - having regard to the Commission Communication to the Council and the European Parliament entitled 'A forward-looking radio spectrum policy for the European Union: Second annual report' (COM(2005)0411),
 - having regard to the opinion of the Radio Spectrum Policy Group on secondary trading of rights to use radio spectrum of 19 November 2004,
 - having regard to the Presidency Conclusions of the Brussels European Council of 22 and 23 March 2005,
 - having regard to the EU Sustainable Development Strategy adopted at the Gothenburg European Council of 15 and 16 June 2001,
 - having regard to the Commission Working Document entitled 'Integrating environmental considerations into other policy areas — a stocktaking of the Cardiff process' (COM(2004)0394),
 - having regard to the Conclusions of the 2695th Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council meeting of 1 to 5 December 2005 on the i2010 Strategy,
 - having regard to the 25 National Reform Programmes prepared by the Member States at the request of the above mentioned Brussels European Council,
 - having regard to its resolutions of 23 June 2005 on the information society ⁽²⁾ and of 1 December 2005 on European electronic communications regulation and markets 2004 ⁽³⁾,
 - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy and the opinions of the Committee on Culture and Education, the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs (A6-0036/2006),
- A. whereas the EU cannot achieve the Lisbon targets unless the Member States take decisive action to implement fully the i2010 strategy,
- B. whereas a preliminary overview of the 25 National Reform Programmes shows that, broadly speaking, the Member States have taken up the challenge of R&D and innovation, and whereas the majority of Member States also regard eGovernment as being a good way of improving the effectiveness of public administration and public services,
- C. whereas, together with the Commission, Member States and other stakeholders are also responsible for the success of the i2010 initiative,
- D. whereas the correct and timely implementation of the current framework is an essential precondition of an open, competitive and innovative market for electronic communication services; whereas, however, the procedures for transposing and implementing the framework vary greatly among the Member States,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 77, 13.3.2004, p. 1.

⁽²⁾ *Texts Adopted* of that date, P6_TA(2005)0260.

⁽³⁾ *Texts Adopted* of that date, P6_TA(2005)0467.

Tuesday, 14 March 2006

- E. whereas the EU lags behind in research in information and communication technologies (ICT), investing only 80 euro per head as compared to 350 euro in Japan and 400 euro in the US, and the EU must therefore increase investment in research and innovation and urge Member States to increase their research and innovation spending in ICT to catch up,
- F. whereas uptake of ICT by individuals, public services and businesses, especially small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), is necessary to exploit the advantages offered by research and innovation to the full,
- G. whereas the number of subscribers to broadband has almost doubled in the past two years; whereas, however, remote and rural regions are less well served as roll-out is concentrated in densely populated areas,
- H. whereas the benefits of ICT must be made available to all, including different educational, social, gender and age groups,
- I. whereas all citizens have the right to access freely accessible media with a diverse and high-quality content,
- J. whereas the Commission should ensure that the gender perspective is taken into account when developing technical and regulatory instruments; whereas the Commission and Member States should take concrete steps to increase the number of female students in technical fields related to ICT and to ensure that women gain access to new employment opportunities in the ICT area and media at all levels, and that, particular attention should be paid to the situation of women in rural, island, mountainous, and geographically remote areas and other women in the most vulnerable situations,
- K. noting that ICT and the information society, if skilfully managed, may help to narrow social differences, bridge the digital divide and encourage social and territorial cohesion,
- L. whereas digital convergence has the potential to provide consumers with access to a great diversity of improved services and rich content, and thus, the security of the infrastructure must be improved and strengthened and a favourable and secure environment created which stimulates the competitive deployment of these converging services,
- M. whereas ICT can have both a positive direct impact on the environment and indirect social and economic consequences,
- N. whereas the radio spectrum is a key resource for many essential services in society and, therefore, its effective and coherent use can help the EU meet its Lisbon goals if it is ensured that services of general economic interest are adequately provided with spectrum and that it is adequately protected from interference, since this is the optimal way to stimulate growth, competitiveness and employment,
- O. whereas the realisation of the Lisbon goals requires from the EU, from the Member States and from businesses a clear, concrete and uniform investment in ICT,
- P. whereas it is essential for the Member States to invest sufficiently in a flexible regulatory framework which supports the rights of the citizen, and which offers actors in this sector a good basis for marketing new inventions,
 - 1. Considers that freedom to access and use knowledge is the main criterion by which the knowledge-based society can develop democratically and with the technological innovation it needs, as called for in Lisbon;
 - 2. Considers that, unless the digital divide is overcome, enabling all citizens to gain access to, use and take part in the production of knowledge, there will be no knowledge-based society, but rather a cultural and industrial decline in the EU as a whole;

Tuesday, 14 March 2006

3. Calls on the Commission to consider citizens not only as passive consumers of digital content, but also as producers of knowledge and to draw up a programme and a favourable legal framework to make them active participants in a knowledge-based society, thereby achieving the Lisbon objectives;
4. Urges the Commission to adopt a concrete, innovative and forward-looking line in its reform of legislation on ICT, which must be regarded as a considerably broader concept than is the case in the Commission's communication and which must include the rights of consumers and users; considers that any further proposals should contain clear definitions of the terms 'information society services', 'media', 'media services' and 'audio-visual services' used by the Commission;
5. Insists that all European legislation relating to communications and information must be founded on technological neutrality, thus guaranteeing that new inventions and actors can access the market as easily as possible;
6. Notes that, since the switchover from analogue to digital encourages a proliferation of forms of delivery, it should take place using coordinated policies and within an appropriate legal framework, so as to counteract the uniformity which could result from media concentration;
7. Calls on the Member States to invest more heavily in the exploitation of ICT in public sector services, such as health, education, and government, in which ICT can make it easier to respond to future social service needs and to cooperate in order to develop pan-European services;
8. Believes that public service delivery in the information society should clearly reflect the increasingly sophisticated needs of individual users and groups and therefore be based on an adequate response by the supplying industry to such needs with a view to effective and customised service design;
9. Given the fact that investment in ICT is one of the most important factors in growth and productivity, urges the Member States and businesses to encourage higher investment in ICT in order to reduce the performance gap in comparison with our competitors;
10. Acknowledges that ICT is one of the most important tools needed to turn developing countries into global powers;
11. Is, however, concerned that the Commission continues to define its strategy and formulate its policy on job-creation on the basis of little or no reliable statistical evidence; recalls that while headline growth continues in ICT, there has not always been similar growth in employment; recalls that employment rates in the EU are currently seven points below Lisbon targets; calls on the Commission to carry out in-depth statistical analyses of the effects of technological change on the ICT employment market in the EU;
12. Stresses the importance of digital convergence and advocates the removal of obstacles to the economic, social and cultural development of individual States, an objective formulated at the 2005 World Summit on the Information Society (the Tunis Commitment of 18 November 2005);
13. Calls on Member States and the Commission, when evaluating Member States' stability and convergence programmes, to examine rigorously the importance of, and the role played, by ICT in economic growth, employment and the functioning of EMU;
14. Recalls that the i2010 objectives for the information society as well as the Lisbon Agenda goals require that such objectives will be adequately reflected in the EU's financial perspectives for 2007-2013;
15. Reiterates the importance for SMEs, start-ups and the ICT sector in general of transparent and liquid capital markets, which lower the cost of borrowing; particularly supports micro-loans and other forms of risk capital;

Tuesday, 14 March 2006

16. Draws attention to the EU's persistent and serious lack of entrepreneurship and risk-taking culture; calls for the elimination of administrative burdens on SMEs and start-ups, together with financial relief in the start-up phase;

17. Reiterates the importance of the i2010 information society in fighting regional and social imbalances across the Member States as stressed in the Commission Communication entitled 'Cohesion Policy in Support of Growth and Jobs: Community Strategic Guidelines, 2007-2013' (COM(2005)0299);

Objective 1: A single European information space

18. Notes that, in the interest of the growth and development of the EU, it is as important to ensure widespread exploitation of existing knowledge and technology in all activities and all areas of activity, whether in public administration, in business, or in citizens' everyday life, in other words the emergence of a ubiquitous information society, as it is to produce new knowledge concerning ICT;

19. Stresses that the i2010 programme represents a decisive phase in the emergence of the information society which should enable everyone to be a participant, through access to technology and knowledge, a user, through interactivity and the new forms of social interaction offered by networks, and a critical citizen with freedom of choice; points out that the advent of the information society brings with it new responsibilities for those who provide information and communication, and is creating new ways for citizens, from particularly vulnerable population groups (elderly people, people with disabilities, those living alone or in social difficulties, etc.) to exercise their rights, which enable them to benefit to the full from the spread of new ICT; urges the Commission and Member States to help ensure that technology is more accessible to citizens and meets the moral demands of society;

20. Strongly supports i2010 as a new strategic tool to establish the framework for all ICT-related initiatives in the EU; recommends keeping in mind that the definition of an EU information society space cannot be carried out in isolation from international development in this area;

21. Insists that the horizontal nature of ICT be taken into account, which requires cooperation and coordination between the EU's activities, and at Member State level, as well as incentives for actors in the sector to produce and exploit new inventions;

22. Insists that European and national legislation should support competition so as to reflect the horizontal nature of ICT and should seek to avoid the emergence and preservation of vertical structures which are harmful to competition and innovation; notes that vertical structures may prevent consumers from benefiting from competition;

23. Urges the Commission and the Member States to set as an objective the flexibility, simplification, and speedy and simultaneous implementation of laws in this area and their rapid adjustment to new needs resulting from technological developments; is of the view that legislation should encourage the production of new knowledge and the development of new technologies, promote investment in content production, equipment, networks and network services in the ICT field, promote competition, the exploitation of information technology and services and information security and, lastly, support SMEs so that they play a key role in the sector;

24. Notes that the Commission is required to guarantee and promote media pluralism by interpreting and implementing the provisions which concern the electronic media infrastructure; draws attention to its repeated request to the Commission to draw up a green paper on concentration of media ownership and respect for the principles of freedom of information and pluralism, bearing in mind that this would encourage debate on the underlying issues at a time when technologies and the market are undergoing sweeping transformations; regrets that this point is not covered in the i2010 work plan; calls on the Commission to establish a regulatory framework for the internet, given that it is the fundamental vehicle for a knowledge-based economy;

25. Insists that legislation should seek to speed up the development and diversity of the information society and the dissemination of its benefits to society as a whole;

Tuesday, 14 March 2006

26. Notes that it is extremely important for people to be guaranteed the broadest possible access to high-quality content and services anywhere, using the technology of their choice within the limitations set by their circumstances; further notes that users (consumers, citizens) are prepared to adopt new services and technical tools only if they feel they are easy enough to use and meaningful in terms of content;

27. Recalls that the development of an efficient, ubiquitous information society calls for the universal provision of broadband and wireless technology, which requires further support at Member State level, and calls for the encouragement of, and investment in, joint projects, the protection of intellectual property rights and the promotion of digital media; considers that it should also be possible for users to change their service provider without having to change their e-mail address;

28. Recognises that broadband is a precondition for the development of a ubiquitous information society; considers that this should be a definite objective of convergence between the Member States and their regions;

29. Recalls that the transition to a ubiquitous information society will also promote sustainable development, to which the EU is committed; believes that ICT should reduce the burden on the environment and the use of natural resources and promote social development;

30. Notes the growing role of intangible rights as a tool of commercial policy in the context of issues relating to free trade and calls for measures to be taken to protect producer's rights and to combat illegal and pirated content; takes the view that this is the only way to safeguard and promote the development of content; warns of the increasing attempts in the USA to use patent and intellectual property legislation as a protectionist tool of trade policy;

31. Calls on the Commission to specify clear actions to provide protection from harmful content, and in this context, to promote, inter alia, the role of the European Network and Information Security Agency;

32. Calls on the Commission, in reviewing the legislation, to include measures to safeguard the precautionary principle as regards health, consumer protection and environment issues, in cooperation with other bodies, such as the World Health Organisation;

33. Calls on the Commission, in reviewing the legislation, to set down quality criteria, such as the protection of childhood and freedom of choice of consumers;

34. Acknowledges the adoption by the Commission of a proposal for a directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Council Directive 89/552/EEC on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the pursuit of television broadcasting activities (COM(2005)0646) that aims to modernise the so-called 'Television without Frontiers' Directive, which is essential as the EU evolves into a European information society; stresses that the directive must be adapted to changes in a converging media world and this must be duly taken into account as far as its scope is concerned; notes that this should aid the creation of a favourable environment for European industry, repealing unnecessary rules and moving towards a ubiquitous information society; recognises, furthermore, that the connections between content regulation and infrastructure regulation that are recognised in the legal framework for electronic communications have proved their worth and should be maintained in future;

35. Urges the Commission to promote, without delay, concrete activities for facilitating and supporting the creation and distribution of European content; takes the view that the continuation of existing support programmes must be guaranteed and their indispensability in developing the information society must be recognised; insists that pan-European broadcasting systems such as EuroNews, should be supported; stresses that the production of content which respects cultural and linguistic diversity presents an opportunity to encourage new skills and new jobs, particularly in the design and creation sectors, throughout the 25 Member States, and that these new occupations should be allowed to develop within a harmonised regulatory framework which guarantees them economic security and legal certainty;

Tuesday, 14 March 2006

36. Considers that any introduction of a market-based approach to spectrum would require the support of regulators, operators and other actors and warns against leaving radio spectrum policy solely to the play of market forces; considers however, that the spectrum should be regulated in accordance with rules which keep pace with very rapidly changing market requirements in a flexible and efficient manner; suggests that any changes are based on a careful analysis and the rectification of current problems, paying due attention to the interests of the Member States, and that, in this connection, care must always be taken to ensure sufficient freedom from interference; notes that the prices paid at auctions of 3G spectrum slowed down the introduction of third-generation mobile phone networks, and that a repetition of such a situation must be avoided;

37. Considers that the most central issue in radio spectrum policy is the effort to achieve flexible regulation with appropriate and sufficient harmonisation in the spectrum sectors at EU level; notes that the management of radio spectrum should seek to make market access as easy as possible for new inventions and actors in the sector, including the regions, while facilitating the development of Community media; calls on the Commission to bring forward appropriate proposals in this area; notes that compliance with interference regulations is absolutely essential in a digital environment;

38. Recalls that the development of network security is indispensable in order to increase confidence in all network services, commercial and eGovernment services; urges that network security be promoted by technical and legislative means and through education, e.g. by creating a Europe-wide information security strategy and launching an annual European information security day to increase citizens' awareness of information security, while taking care to ensure that this security does not restrict freedom of expression and citizens' rights; welcomes the Commission proposal to launch a safe information society strategy in 2006 seeking to increase both investor and user confidence in internet services and their reliability as a means of addressing the issues of fraud (affecting purchases), illegal and harmful content (concerning the protection of minors and human dignity and the protection of privacy) and technological shortcomings (so as to ensure the efficient and effective use of ICT);

39. Recalls that industrial and competition policy must support the EU's innovation industry; notes that this requires the securing of a flexible regulatory basis which also provides incentives;

40. Recalls that the sectoral regulation of the ICT industry was planned from the outset as a transitional solution for the opening of the markets and that, in the medium term, the transition to the use of only the general rules of competition must take place;

41. Warns that regulation and other action by the authorities must not lead to some technologies being favoured at the expense of others: regulation must be technology neutral;

42. Stresses how important it is, in order to ensure non-discriminatory access to information society content and prevent a digital divide within the EU, that the technical requirements should be met; reiterates, therefore, its calls for the establishment of open, interoperable standards, particularly in the field of application program interfaces pursuant to Article 18 of the Framework Directive;

43. Recognises the importance of a healthy ICT trade balance as a vital component in support of the EU's position in the global economy; asks the Commission to deliver, by September 2006, a complete and analytical overview of the EU's strengths and weaknesses in all ICT-related sectors;

Objective 2: Innovation and investment in Research

44. Stresses that an innovative ICT industry is an indispensable prerequisite for economic growth and job creation in the EU, particularly in industries and services other than ICT itself;

Tuesday, 14 March 2006

45. Recalls that ICT has already changed the way in which businesses operate globally, and that business are benefiting from innovations such as utility computing, software development and new web service architectures; urges the EU to create an environment which favours innovation with a view to maintaining its competitive advantage;

46. Urges the speedy adoption of the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development and of the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme for 2007-2013, both of which must provide adequate financial resources to support ICT as a driver for competitiveness, growth and jobs; stresses the emphasis which should be given to strengthening entrepreneurship, particularly of SMEs, especially in sectors which benefit from new ICT;

47. Demands that the Commission and the Member States take concrete actions to exploit the opportunities created by ICT, in order to hinder the drift of jobs to low-pay countries and achieve the highest level of growth and employment possible; considers it vital to increase the level of investment to achieve the Barcelona 3 % GDP target and, in the longer term, to keep it permanently geared to global competition levels;

48. Believes that the EU's economic future lies in higher growth in labour productivity;

49. Asks the Commission and Member States to provide to Parliament, by September 2006, an impact analysis on the influence of the ICT economy in supporting stronger growth in the various Member States and European regions;

50. Notes that measures must be taken as a matter of urgency at EU level to remove obstacles to the development of the Next Generation Networks; calls on the Commission to consider this issue in its forthcoming review of the regulatory framework for electronic communications;

51. Notes that the application of ICT in areas such as language and welfare technology is one which comes naturally to the Community and also has great potential at global level; urges the EU and the Member States to support research in these areas;

52. Recommends that more attention is focused on the role that ICT plays in creating an open and knowledge-based society; asks the Commission and Member States to create a more coherent strategy for educational standards in ICT;

53. Urges the Commission and the Member States to seek concrete ways to promote the networking of all major actors (big business and SMEs, public authorities and research establishments) and to boost their opportunities to participate in the realisation and exploitation of projects;

54. Recalls the EU's commitments to innovation and research contained in the Commission's Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Jobs (2005-2008) (COM(2005)0141), and calls for the consistent implementation of the guidelines in connection with the Lisbon reform agenda;

55. Believes in simpler national tax systems that create incentives to invest in ICT and R&D; in this regard, welcomes the Commission's proposals to establish a common consolidated corporate tax base;

Objective 3: A single European information society

56. Urges the Member States, by means of their national reform programmes, to define the priorities of the information society, to intensify their efforts in this sector and to report annually on the progress of these programmes, giving a detailed account not only of the development of the information society indicators but also of the social and economic usefulness of the programmes;

Tuesday, 14 March 2006

57. Recalls that the success of the entire i2010 strategy will be judged by the extent to which it reaches every last European citizen; believes that in attaining this objective, the regions have a key role to play, and they must therefore be mobilised and further assisted, so that they take substantive initiatives for regional convergence and cohesion by bridging the digital divide;

58. Recalls that social security, health and welfare are key sectors in the development of the information society;

59. Notes that public services and public broadcasting services have an important role to play in national and business activity since they contribute to social cohesion, the democratic discourse and pluralism in Europe; points out, furthermore, that a European legal framework for the information and communications society must ensure that public broadcasting services are able to take part in technological and social developments and to continue to perform their social function;

60. Notes that public broadcasting will continue to have a major role to play in the ubiquitous information society as a protector of publicly accessible high-quality and independent information; stresses the importance of guaranteeing public broadcasting access to the platforms of the future;

61. Points to the importance of guaranteeing a universal right of access to the necessary media education and literacy skills, especially in electronic media that convey images and in the new interactive digital technologies, in order to avert new forms of social and cultural exclusion; and considers that equal access to a free-to-air media environment with a varied range of high-quality content is a fundamental right to be enjoyed by European citizens; stresses in this connection the role played by public service broadcasting content in promoting social cohesion, democratic discourse and pluralism in Europe, and insists that the performance of these tasks must continue to be guaranteed in future;

62. Calls for emphasis to be given to the issues of interoperability and best practices in public-sector electronic services for citizens and undertakings in matters of taxation, health, insurance cover and pensions etc., with the overriding objective of facilitating the free and unimpeded movement, establishment and employment of citizens in the Member States;

63. Urges national governments to implement i2010 initiatives and programmes in the reform of their public administration in order to provide better, more efficient and more easily accessible services to their SMEs, as well as their citizens;

64. Recalls the potential of ICT technologies but also the institutional changes required in order to promote electronic democracy through the electronic participation of European citizens in the decision making process, and calls for the relevant promotional measures to be taken;

65. Recalls that, in the promotion of participation, investment also needs to be made in those skills which Europeans need in order to function in the information society; demands specific activities for the development of ICT skills, and calls for citizens' awareness of the new opportunities offered by ICT also to be raised via traditional channels of communication setting out the advantages of online administration and thereby also encouraging the utilisation of new services;

66. Notes that over half of the EU population does not benefit in full from ICT; insists that ICT also implies investment in human capital to foster creativity through higher budgets for education and culture; welcomes the Commission's initiative to promote digital literacy through education and various training programmes, thereby making ICT products and services more accessible;

67. Stresses the major role of specialised education in ICT, both at school and in the context of lifelong education, in particular for women, in ensuring that people are kept up to date and able to make use of modern technologies for their professional and personal needs;

Tuesday, 14 March 2006

68. Notes that, because of the ageing of the European population, there is a need to invest in product planning, particularly in the Design for All principle, and most of all in all appropriate solutions as regards technology, services and the environment; demands that particular account be taken of the needs of specific groups, such as the elderly or people with disabilities; calls on the Commission to use its forthcoming inclusion strategy to this end;

69. Demands that the Member States take additional measures to ensure access to eGovernment services irrespective of place, time or wealth;

70. Recalls that every EU citizen has the right to access to information; urges the Commission to speed up the e-inclusion initiative planned for 2008, which will meet the challenges of e-literacy, ageing and e-accessibility, geographical discrepancies and the guarantee of social services for all; urges the Commission to draw up without delay a proposal for a charter of citizens' fundamental rights for the digital age; urges the Member States to ensure that no citizen or consumer is excluded against their will from the essential services of the ubiquitous information society;

71. Proposes that, to achieve good governance and ensure full citizenship to all European individuals in the information society, a Charter of eRights should progressively be adopted by public administrations in Europe as a shared set of principles and guidelines defining the framework within which all citizens can enjoy those rights; proposes that such principles be translated into implementation actions and programmes at the national and regional level to achieve a competitive and competent society in the digital age and ensure social and territorial cohesion; notes that fair and non-discriminatory access to transparent, diverse and complete information as well as high quality services, in a secure environment, via any telecommunication service or platform — from the Internet to mobile phones — based on open and interoperable standards is a right essential to the enjoyment of active citizenship in the information society age, and should be included in a Charter of eRights; considers that the Charter should also include the rights of all citizens to be able to understand and interact with the administrations involved and therefore to participate equally in decision-making and policy-making processes; considers that rationalisation, re-engineering, transparency and access of and to public services are fundamental prerequisites for the development of a participative citizenship;

72. Maintains that, because of the extraordinary technological development which has radically transformed them, the media in present-day societies are now able to decisively influence the ideas and behaviour of citizens and are therefore intrinsic to the workings of democracy in each and every country, and that e-accessibility is necessarily founded on human rights; calls on the Commission to respect these fundamental values of the audiovisual model in its i2010 Initiative, and to see that justice is done to the special role which the audiovisual media, with their dual nature as economic and cultural goods, have to play in promoting cultural diversity;

73. Stresses the importance of the protection of privacy and information security in the ubiquitous information society; recalls that legislation must guarantee the confidence of citizens and business in digital content and communications;

74. Stresses the importance in economic and social terms of breaking the digital isolation of rural areas, and emphasises that these areas have the potential to contribute to regional, national and European wealth creation; therefore considers it essential for all areas to be able to benefit, rather than suffer, from the exponential increase in innovation in the ICT field;

75. Believes that, as advocated in Council of Europe Recommendation 1466 (2000), media education should serve to provide citizens, from their earliest youth, with the technical or other wherewithal to bring a critical interpretation to bear on, and use with a view to deriving personal benefit from, the ever-expanding volume of information and communication; maintains, in addition, that, helped by a learning process of this kind, citizens will be in a position to formulate messages and select the media best suited to impart them and thus become able to exercise their right to freedom of information and expression to the full;

76. Calls upon the Commission to invest its research resources in assessing the impact of the information society on European society and culture;

Tuesday, 14 March 2006

77. Urges that, in the era of convergence, mobility and interactivity of all political decisions including those within the EU — whether concerning the setting of the regulatory framework to govern the services and content transmitted by the new media, or in the fields of infrastructure measures or of competition law and subsidies — the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions of 20 October 2005, which not only lays down an obligation on the Member States to protect cultural diversity and promote multiculturalism but also enshrines the dual nature of the audiovisual media as both economic and a cultural goods, should be fully complied with; recalls that the information society and properly managed ICT may prove extremely positive in strengthening and protecting cultural diversity and multilingualism;

78. Takes the view that the current debate on the future of the Union provides a very good opportunity for discussion of institutional matters with a view to consolidating and clarifying the European institutional model and above all for the institutions, especially the Commission, to manifest their interest in the wider issues of democracy and in the concerns of citizens; welcomes the opportunity which this reflection period offers the European institutions to legislate in such a way as to meet the wider concerns of the public and to reflect them in their policies;

79. Considers that a focus on the gender dimension of ICT is essential, to prevent the digital revolution from having an adverse impact on gender equality or the perpetuation of existing inequalities and discrimination, notes that it is important for proper account to be taken of all of the many facets of the digital divide, particularly gender, which should be the subject of a specific measure under the future European Initiative on e-Inclusion; considers that the emerging risk of social exclusion owing to the inability to use the new technologies and information technologies affects women disproportionately;

80. Calls on the Commission to conduct, an analysis of the *acquis communautaire*, insofar as it relates to the information society, and in particular from a gender perspective; calls on the Commission to establish a dialogue with the main players on the media market, with a view to the drafting of a Gender Equality Code for the media; calls on the Commission to pay special attention to the misuse of new ICT for trafficking women and children, and to promote all legal and technological initiatives necessary in order to combat this problem;

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81. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission and to the governments of the Member States.

P6_TA(2006)0080

Tackling racism in football

Declaration of the European Parliament on tackling racism in football

The European Parliament,

— having regard to Rule 116 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. recognising the serious incidents of racism that have occurred in football matches across Europe,

B. whereas one of the objectives pursued by the European Union under Article 13 of the EC Treaty is protection against discrimination based on ethnic origin and nationality,