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**COMMUNICATION BY THE PRESIDENT TO THE COMMISSION IN
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Towards the e-Commission

EUROPA 2ND GENERATION

**ADVANCED WEB SERVICES
TO
CITIZENS, BUSINESS AND OTHER PROFESSIONAL USERS**

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Management Summary

In the last few years, EUROPA – and the Commission’s site in particular – has grown into one of the largest, most popular and most referenced public web-sites in the world. However, a number of shortcomings have lately become very acute and could jeopardise the future. They need to be tackled urgently in order to consolidate the foundations upon which to develop better web services to citizens and business as called for by the e-Commission action plan.

This paper sets out the roadmap to implement 2nd generation web sites fulfilling the quality of service expected from modern administrations in the era of e-government according to three main strands:

- Information services providing easy access for all to updated, user friendly and multilingual information tailored to the users’ needs;
- Interactive communication services allowing citizens a real say in the shaping and implementation of policies through open, real-time, on-line, multilingual dialogue with the Commission administration (cf. Communication on Interactive Policy Making (SEC (2001) 522)).
- Transaction services allowing citizens electronic access to all basic forms of transactions with the EU, e.g. for procurement, financial operations, recruitment, enrolling for events, acquisition or purchase of documents etc.

Achieving these political objectives will require:

- an overall reference framework consisting of common e-service modules (core e-services), e-services support functions (editorial, publishing and technical) and technological infrastructure;
- decentralised implementation of the information, interactive and transaction services required by specific users;
- a strong commitment from top management to fully exploit the opportunities offered by web technologies for the benefit of end users;
- a continuous co-operative effort across departments’ boundaries to overcome existing inflexibilities and ensure coherence.

Given the available resources for 2001 and 2002, and assuming the availability of all resources as defined in the financial statement for 2003 and 2004, the following timetable for the implementation of EUROPA II can be foreseen:

2001/2 Opening of a significant set of thematic portals and of an initial set of e-services on EUROPA. Construction of core e-services and e-Support services to allow the completion of further e-services and the migration of all EUROPA sites to an integrated thematic structure.

2003/4 Availability of a complete set of e-services. All information sites are integrated in the overall thematic portal structure of EUROPA.

Implementation of EUROPA II will be monitored by the EUROPA II Steering Committee composed of high level representatives of the Departments with crucial responsibility in the development of the overall reference framework within which all DG's will freely develop the second generation web sites featuring the high quality information, interactive and transaction services called for by e-Commission and the White Paper on Reform.

Editorial and technical coherence will be monitored by the EUROPA II Editorial Committee and the Infrastructure and Services Committee respectively.

The EUROPA Forum, gathering together the formally nominated persons responsible for the websites of all DG's will serve as the platform for exchange of best practices and expression of information producers' requirements.

The Commission is invited to approve the action plan proposed in this communication

1. INTRODUCTION

The three principal strands of e-Commission are (1) modernisation of internal administration, (2) more efficient communication with external partners and (3) better public service to citizens and business.

EUROPA represents a fundamental platform for the successful delivery of the second and third of these strands.

The White Paper on Reform states in Chapter VI "Towards the e-Commission" that "the Commission must be at the forefront of web-based technologies, which is the only solution to cope with the increased demand and to offer a professional service". Action 8c indicates that "the Commission must allocate the necessary financial, technical and personnel resources for constant maintenance and up-grading of the EUROPA site. Defining the necessary resources will be the first step".

This communication sets the roadmap for the Commission to reinforce online civic engagement with the institution.

An inter-service group created in the above context, chaired by PRESS and composed of 12 DGs¹ (plus a representative of the Forum of Europa's webmasters) held 7 meetings between May 2000 and March 2001.

The group considered:

- The current limitations of EUROPA,
- The new services the Commission is committed to deliver to better serve citizens and business (e-Government),
- The best practices in leading world administrations and within the Commission,
- The most suitable strategy for the Commission services in view of delivering e-government services within a common reference architecture,
- The implementation roadmap,
- The management structure needed to guarantee coherence and best value for money,
- The decisions to be adopted by the Commission.

The current limitations

In the last few years, the Commission and its departments have successfully introduced web technologies as the fastest and most efficient tool to interact with and deliver multilingual information to the public. EUROPA – and the Commission's site in particular – has grown into one of the largest, most popular and most referenced public web-sites in the world.

¹ PRESS, INFSO, SG, EAC, OPOCE, SDT, EMPL, SJ, BUDG, ADMIN, MARKT, ENTR

However, due to the increasing number of sources and quantities of information delivered, difficulties caused by a number of shortcomings have lately become very acute and could jeopardise the future. The information content collection/provision remains substantially manual: data capture often relies on the initiative of webmasters/editors to seek and collect information rather than on an organised flow from the Directorates/units of a DG. Quality is debatable. Individuals and organisations criticise the level of multilingualism available on the Commission site. The exploitation of Internet interactivity remains limited.

In the present situation there is a serious risk of the Commission site exploding into a labyrinth of uncoordinated sites. The current shortcomings need to be tackled urgently by the introduction of authoring and content management tools in order to (a) consolidate the foundations upon which to develop better web services to citizens and business as called for by the e-Commission; (b) alleviate as soon as possible the burden presently put on the webmasters and (c) allow time and resources for creating a new generation of Commission websites, ensuring better content and services for the citizens and business.

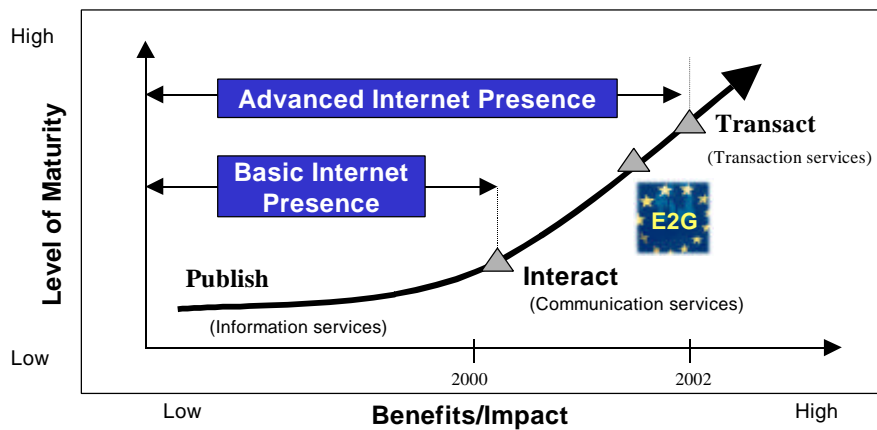
e-Commission web objectives

The Lisbon European Council called for public administrations at all levels to exploit the new information technologies and for the Member States to provide widespread electronic access to main basic public services by 2003. Under its objective 3b (Government on-line) the e-Europe Action Plan includes a commitment from the Commission itself, to "revise its procedures to better exploit digital technologies in the context of the reform".

The Inter-service Working Group Action 8c of the White Paper on Reform has analysed as follows the advanced internet services that the E-Commission is politically committed to deliver by 2003 (see diagram below):

- **Information services**, that provide citizens, media, business, administrations and other decision makers with easy and effective access to information, thus increasing transparency and understanding of the policies and activities of the EU;
- **Interactive communication services**, that allow better contacts with citizens, business, civil society and public actors thereby facilitating policy consultations, and feedback mechanisms, in order to contribute to the shaping of policies, the activities and the services of the EU. To this end a Communication on Interactive Policy Making has been adopted recently by the Commission
- **Transaction services**, that allow access to all basic forms of transactions with the EU, e.g. for procurement, financial operations, recruitment, enrolling for events, acquisition or purchase of documents etc.

The above advanced services should be supported as often as possible in partnership with other EU institutions, Member States - including information relays and multipliers -, NGO's, associations, lobby groups, companies working with EU institutions, citizens groups and others.



2. BEST PRACTICES IN LEADING ADMINISTRATIONS AND IN THE COMMISSION

The interservice group examined the best practices by leading administrations in the world and current prototypes/experiences in the most advanced Commission services.

It recognised that portals are today the maturest stage of development of public administration web-sites and are in the process of being implemented by leading e-administrations in the world. Their objective is to integrate through a unique entry a complete range of information and services of an organisation or sector, without the need for the user to know about the organisational complexity behind the scene.

It also considered that the creation of portals, within the Europa web-site, by policy, by audience or by service would constitute:

- A logical follow-up to the reorganisation of the Commission decided in October 1999
- A substantial development on the road to e-Commission and better governance.

It stressed that a successful development of portals will require:

- stronger co-ordination efforts across departments' boundaries
- A coherent reference architecture for the Commission as a whole.
- Stronger central support in the fields of: editorial co-ordination, technological platform, implementation of central core e-services, guidelines, e-Services support, and outsourcing.

The interservice group agreed that, in order to reach the objectives as targeted in the e-Europe and e-Commission objectives, there would be a case for a "big bang" operation over the possible shortest period of time migrating all the existing Europa web-sites into the new common framework. The interservice group, however, felt

that this approach, adopted by several countries and multinational organisations, would require financial perspectives wider than the existing ones and that a gradual approach, geared to the state of preparedness and to the availability of resources within the various Commission departments, would be more realistic.

It agreed that the e-Europe portal prototype developed in 2000 by DG INFSO with the support of OPOCE constitutes a very promising model. Its development in 2001 into a full fledged pilot project presents potential and significant spin off effects for other portal projects presently considered by several DGs.

The following projects should be seen as pace setters for all Commission departments:

Thematic portals:

- Information Society (INFSO)
- Environment (ENV)
- Research (RESEARCH)
- The EU in the World (Relex family)

Portals by audience

- Virtual Press Office (PRESS)
- Dialogue with Citizens website (MARKT)
- Dialogue with Business website (MARKT) and business networks (ENTR)

Portals by service

- EU Law (OPOCE)
- EU administrations (ENTR)
- Statistics (ESTAT)
- Publications (OPOCE)
- Libraries (EAC)
- Recruitment (ADMIN)

Each of these portals would integrate many sub-sites often scattered among various DGs depending on their respective competence. Their development in 2001/2002 would provide useful experience for the further development in 2002/2003 of the Europa portal. Such a model will be proposed to the other EU institutions.

While developing e-government (information, interactivity, and transactions) portals, the Commission will use its best endeavours to ensure that its web-sites are as fully accessible by all as is practically feasible. The Commission will approach this through high quality management and publishing guidelines and tools for editorial, graphical, technical work. In this context accessibility refers not only to all forms of physical disability and to the problems encountered by all those on the wrong side of the digital divide, but also to the level of multilingualism sustained by the Commission services. A policy setting minimum standards for multilingualism matched by the corresponding resources for translation

and site management will need to be identified in the context of the enlargement preparations

3. INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION, TRANSACTIONS: DECENTRALISED IMPLEMENTATION

Commission services need to prepare themselves to implement e-Commission (information, communication, and transactions) and to review their internal processes on the basis of converging guidelines.

3.1. Information Services

Better exploitation of Internet to support information services means making these services more consistently up to date, accessible and proactive, less “one way” and more relevant to the target audiences’ needs and interests.

3.1.1. Content

The editorial policy of the Commission’s Departments will cater for better editorial co-ordination of released information, seek better linguistic coverage of available content, design a thematic approach and ensure consistency of content among published products (traditional and electronic), their regular updating and the archiving of their electronic content. Information units of the individual Departments should ensure that their publications are:

- User driven - Publications must be tailored to the needs and language expectations of their specific target audience (profiling, interactivity).
- Coherent - Published contents must be consistent whatever media is used.
- Thematic - End-users should not need to know the internal structure of the Commission.
- Multimedia-based - The publishing media (i.e. paper, CD-ROM, Internet, e-mail, eBook, WAP...) are complementary.

3.1.2. Publishing

Printed publications remain essential in respect of the the needs of certain target audiences. However, electronic publishing via Internet and digital networks should come first. Other media such as paper, CD-ROMs and/or combined products should be derived therefrom. Printing on request will better cater for the real audience of paper products, minimise stocks and optimise dissemination channels. Re-use of the same content or part of it for producing combined (Internet, CD-ROM, and fact-sheets...) and derived products (WAI compatible, e-Book, WAP...) will be more cost effective.

The use of authoring and content management tools will facilitate:

- Implementation of common guidelines, style sheets, multilingual presence,

- Management of thematic publications and thematic indexing of documents,
- Monitoring of "what" is published, "when" and "by whom"; including the regular archiving of electronic information no longer to be offered but still having an important historical, administrative or legal value.

The new authoring and content management tools should shorten time to publication and allow cost savings by:

- Integrating office automation and authoring tools on the user desktop with publishing facilities;
- Implementing workflow mechanisms to ensure a better control of manuscripts between the various partners, in particular the editorial teams, translations services and proof readers;
- Interfacing with publishing software used either by Commission services or sub-contractors;

3.1.3. Dissemination

The objective of maximising visibility and effectiveness, while reducing marginal costs will require:

- Use of open standards (i.e. XML, ICE, NewsML, UIO, ...) to widen accessibility and market opportunity on information, interactive communication and transactions services,
- Strengthened partnership with multipliers (i.e. EU institutions, Member states, information relays, associations or lobby groups, companies working together with EU institutions, citizens groups) based upon structured exchanges of EU information and open standards, as well as customisation to specific readerships;
- Implementing the dissemination policies (i.e. publications, services, ...), copyrights and tariffs consistently;
- Value added services would require authentication of users, registration to services or even paying subscriptions. State of the art technology will have to be put in place respecting security and confidentiality requirements;
- Interactive services offering common service level agreements, including reader services.

3.2. Communication services

Exploiting Internet interactivity to offer better communication services means to open real-time, on-line, multilingual two-way dialogue with the Commission's target audiences for the shaping of policies and activities.

There are three main sub-areas: consultation and feedback mechanisms, e-mail and interactive fora. This communication does not address them in depth.

3.2.1. Consultation and feedback mechanisms

In the context of creating an 'E-Commission', the European Commission recently adopted a Communication on Interactive Policy Making (SEC (2001) 522 of 3.4.2001). The main purpose of this new initiative is to improve governance by using the Internet for collecting and analysing reactions in the marketplace for use in the European Union's policy-making process. This system will be used by the Commission to evaluate existing EU policies and for open consultations on new initiatives. The Interactive Policy Making initiative will enable the Commission, as a modern public administration, to respond more quickly and accurately to the demands of citizens, consumers and business and, therefore, to make policy-making at EU level more comprehensive and effective.

3.2.2. E-mail contact points

Commission policy or guidelines are to be developed for web-site e-mail use in relations with external audiences, except as far as Internet and e-mail/use from equipment of the Commission is concerned (Guide of SG: "Use of the Internet and electronic mail from Commission equipment" - Sept 98). The creation of electronic-mail boxes within each Department, as well as the follow-up of messages, need to be co-ordinated and afforded sufficiently important status.

3.2.3. Interactive fora

A few interactive forums exist, hosted on the Commission servers. Shared knowledge has to be developed within the Commission departments about the topics addressed in the fora, their composition, their management and their usefulness in understanding participants' reactions or contributions to policies or activities.

Managed and moderated interactive fora (temporary or permanent) hosted in the EU web-sites could be a way to collect more specialised feedback on concrete issues from relevant e-Communities, and also a means to influence their opinion/position on such issues.

3.3. Transaction services

Exploiting Internet interactivity to support transaction services means transferring to the web formal administrative and business processes and operations previously carried out by traditional means (physical exchanges, paper documents etc.), which often require the rethinking of these processes/operations and their co-ordination with offline channels and back office operations.

These services, in fact, substitute work and procedures previously carried out by staff in one or more departments, by an element of web based self-service, and therefore have the greatest potential impact on the organisation. A comparison can actually be made with business to business and business to consumer's services in the economy at large.

The implementation of transaction services will therefore require a careful and targeted initial choice of pilot services, which corresponds to a realistic assessment of the readiness of the Commission departments involved to change the ways they deliver current services, or to implement new ones.

Under the e-Europe initiative, benchmarks for Government on-line foresee two indicators for assessing progress of implementation throughout Europe:

- Percentage of public services available on-line
- Public use of government on-line services:
 - For information
 - For submission of forms

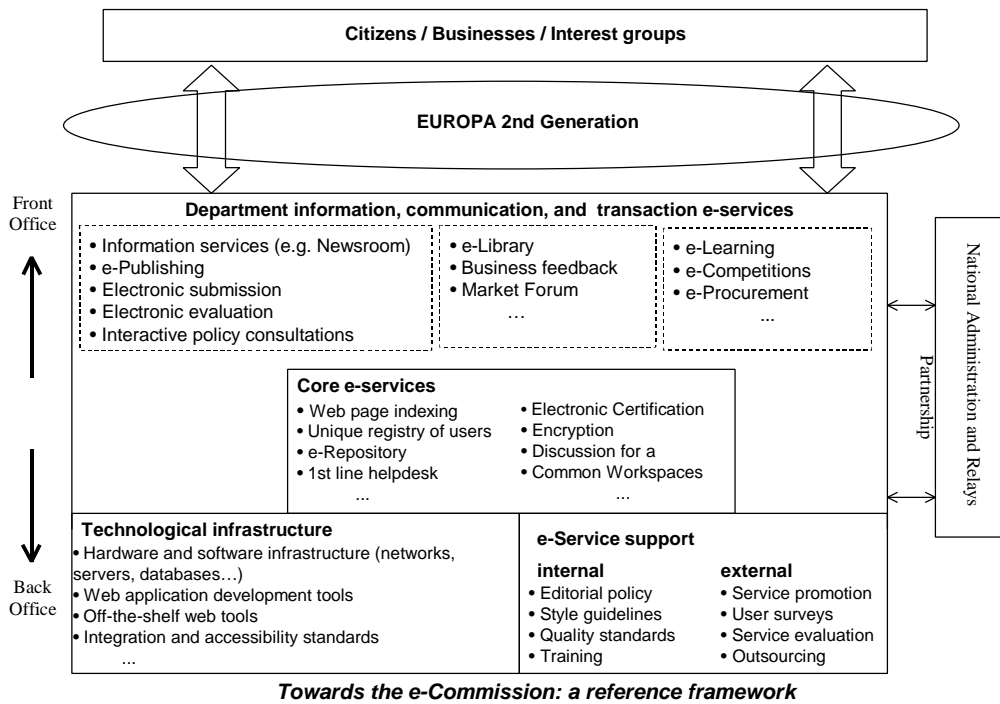
It is obvious that the EU administration's success in implementing the e-Commission is also likely to be judged against such benchmarks of e-Europe for national administrations.

The EUROPA II portals, in collaboration with all participating departments, and based on existing experience, should identify an initial set of transaction services to be offered during the second half of 2001.

The development, implementation and operation of further transaction services needed by the various departments of the Commission will have to be driven by the interested departments, in collaboration with the departments responsible for e-services support and for core e-services.

4. THE REFERENCE ARCHITECTURE FOR EUROPA II

A co-operative effort across departments' boundaries to design, implement and exploit information communication and transaction services requires the implementation of the overall reference framework outlined in the diagram below.



As depicted above, (with some examples), the Commission’s reference architecture for an advanced Internet presence, consists of:

- Decentralised specific e-services
- Common core e-services
- E-services support
- Technological infrastructure.

4.1. Decentralised e-services

Decentralised e-services for information, communication or transactions, will be provided to citizens, target groups or businesses through the portals managed by individual DGs, according to their missions. These range from policy making and monitoring, to project management, managing public relations, personnel recruitment, or procurement. E-services will be performed and operated in a decentralised manner by the interested DGs using their own human and budgetary resources.

To avoid duplications and to ensure economies of scale as well as consistency throughout the Commission, core e-services and e-services support functions should be developed centrally respectively by ADMIN/DI and OPOCE after consultation with the users about their real needs and preferences. This will enable DGs and their departments to concentrate on the performance and operation of their e-services and respective users’ needs, rather than on the e-service implementation, technical, maintenance and outsourcing aspects.

4.2. Common core e-services

Common core e-services are provided not to support directly the specific mission of one department but to achieve service coherence, and economies of scale across the

Commission. Examples are Commission-wide web page indexing services (for the different departments' web-sites), encryption and electronic signatures (for secure communications and transactions of any type), common web work spaces (provision of hardware, software and maintenance, which are customised for different groups and tasks), mailing list servers.

4.3. E-Services support

E-services support is a set of support functions (editorial, translation, publishing, dissemination, e-commerce, archives) designed and provided centrally (mostly by departments with horizontal responsibilities) in order to help achieving:

- Internally: coherent implementation and quality targets for the e-services of the different departments (DGs, Directorates, and Units.)
- Externally: optimal availability and use of e-services for each department's audiences

Service managers of such "e-services support" should carefully implement them, ensure their availability and contribute to their regular updating.

E-services support functions will therefore include:

4.3.1. Guidelines, quality standards

Common guidelines, accessibility and quality standards (including corresponding tools) and service level agreements to support and simplify the editorial activities, the implementation of copyright and liability policies, and the e-services promotion strategies which are to be operated by departments in a decentralised manner, sometimes in partnership with sub-contractors. Some of these guidelines already exist (Inter-institutional style guide, EUROLOOK, Legiswrite, Vade mecum of multimedia publishing, EUROPA's Information providers guide), others will have to be developed.

4.3.2. Externalisation and sub-contracting

Wherever possible and cost-effective, externalisation and sub-contracting will be encouraged and organised for all related activities (editorial, publishing, dissemination, archive) and every phase (lifecycle) of the projects. Calls for tenders will be issued regularly to adapt sub-contracting to requirements and benefit from the market. A common approach like the one made available to other departments by the OPOCE and by the informatics directorate and their framework contracts should be used.

4.3.3. Training

Extensive advisory, training, demonstration and running-in activities will have to be offered to Commission departments.

4.3.4. Feedback and evaluation

Common methodologies to obtain feedback from users and perform quality assessments and users' surveys, in order to reshape and evolve e-services and better match users' needs.

4.4. Technological infrastructure

The technological infrastructure is the standard Commission-wide platform for the implementation of core and departmental e-services. It includes hardware, software, web application development tools and standards.

Special care will be needed to migrate the architecture of information systems adopting a three-function (editing and translating, publishing, and disseminating) approach to support information e-services, allowing better management of the life cycle of information procedures. Attention will also be needed to identify the infrastructure requirements for more extended use of interactive e-services.

In 2001 and subsequent years, priorities will focus on: high performance host equipment ensuring fast response times; adequate telecommunications to cope with growing users' demand; introduction of advanced production methods tailored to the different needs of information providers; multilingual web content management tools (including archiving tools); interactive functions required by new market trends and specific e-Commission projects.

The above-mentioned core e-services, e-services support and technological infrastructure constitute the basis for the smooth customisation, implementation and provision of departmental e-services.

5. ROADMAP: FOUR STEPS TOWARDS THE EUROPA II REFERENCE ARCHITECTURE

The following 4 steps summarise the approach to implement EUROPA II. The three initial steps should take place in parallel with at least one department identified as chef de file:

Step 1: Definition and implementation of the technological platform.

The DI together with the IT services in the DG define the technological platform through Product Management. Specific additional actions should be undertaken within this framework to cover the identification and the implementation of coherent solutions for EUROPA II, i.e. the systems and standards to support the design, management and provision of e- services.

Step 2: Establishment of e-services support.

Preparation of guidelines and operational procedures to create a common understanding for the implementation of e-Services, and to align processes and working methods with technology and operational requirements.

Step 3: Identification and implementation of core e-Services, on the basis of existing departmental services.

An inventory of existing e-Services will have to be made, drawing on all departments with running e-Services. In order to learn about each other's

experiences, it would be the task of the DI to organise an internal workshop where technicians and managers could exchange experiences and identify core e-Services. Implementation of core e-Services should then proceed, drawing on the experience of departments with practical expertise.

Step 4: Upgrade of existing departmental e-Services, and design and implementation of new e-Services

Existing or new e-Services will be upgraded or implemented with the help of e-Services support, based on core e-Services and on the technological platform, and with active participation of departments running e-Services.

Timetable for EUROPA II

2001/2 Design, implementation, initial prototyping of e-Services with key players, organisation in place and managed by “chefs-de-file”, opening of the first thematic portals in EUROPA. At the end of 2002, initial e-services will be operational, and core e-services and e-Support services will be available allowing the completion of all remaining e-services and the migration of all EUROPA sites to an integrated thematic structure.

During this period, all DGs should plan the necessary resource allocations for 2003 and 2004 to achieve the goals set by EUROPA II.

2003/4 All e-Services (information, communication and transaction) and e-Support services identified are available for authors' end-users and partners. All information sites are integrated in a thematic structure and EUROPA is the "Portal of portals" giving access to overall EU information and services.

The follow-up of this roadmap and its adaptation to new needs will be the responsibility of the EUROPA II Steering Committee (cf. chapter 6).

The proposed timetable is based on the following assumptions:

- The availability of the necessary financial and human resources as described in the financial statement annexed.

The overall figures are the following:

- 2001 : 8.45 million €
- 2002 : 10.60 million €
- 2003 : 13.54 million €
- 2004 : 12.57 million €

The estimates include all expenses at central level for the management of the existing EUROPA service and the additional budget requirements at central and departmental level for implementing the recommended roadmap for EUROPA II. For 2001 and 2002 the increase in resources needed at central level will be covered partially by means of redeployment within the existing budget for communication while the rest must be provided within the framework of the global e-Commission project. The main part of

the cost for migrating the strategic sites to thematic portals is to be covered by the responsible DGs by means of their existing budgets, using e-Services support from OPOCE for developing synergy and economy of scale. For 2003 and 2004 additional resources will have to be foreseen in order to ensure the full thematic migration for all Europa sites.

- All DGs work in co-operation in the framework of a co-ordinated and coherent migration plan, with a maximum sharing of experience and the adoption of common methods and tools for implementing the new services.
- All DGs recognise the importance of the electronic communication and foresee where necessary the redeployment of human and financial resources from classical information and communication activities (printed publications, expositions, ...) to the creation of new e-services.
- The EUROPA II Steering Committee (see 6.1) is given the explicit mandate and authority for accompanying and controlling the implementation of EUROPA II.

Even with these conditions satisfied, the proposed implementation scenario still contains some risks and disadvantages:

- The effort is huge and the time schedule is very tight.
- Without clear leadership, the co-operative approach cannot work. The temptation for the development of ad hoc services and the consequent duplication of effort will then be very high.
- There is little room for unexpected events which might re-orient the priorities with respect to the migration
- During 2001 and 2002, the restructuring of EUROPA is limited to a set of priority sites; complete restructuring is not achieved before the end of 2004

Nevertheless, as stated in chapter 2, the plan proposed is a compromise taking into account the state of preparedness and the availability of resources within the various Commission departments. It can ensure the availability of a reasonable number of new e-services within a relatively short timeframe (end 2002) and, given the necessary additional resources (see financial statement), the full migration of EUROPA towards a thematic and service oriented website by the end of 2004.

6. POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Improved internal organisation by department, accompanied by stronger central support (editorial policy, high performance infrastructure, core e-services, e-services support) constitute two key conditions for:

- meeting the objectives of the White Paper on Reform
- improving the cost-effectiveness of the Commission's information activities
- ensuring the Commission maintains the highest standards in Europe and in the world.

Equally, meeting those objectives requires a strengthened four-pillar management structure as described below.

6.1. EUROPA II Steering Committee

The EUROPA II Steering Committee will bring together high level representatives of Departments with crucial responsibility in the field of web communication and information: PRESS (Chair, policy guidelines), INFISO (portal sites models, e-government experiences/results), ADMIN/DI (technological infrastructure, core e-services, training, recruitment, co-ordination with EUROPAlus), OPOCE (publishing, dissemination, e-services support) SG (official documents, transparency, archiving), SdT (multilingualism), MARKT (interactivity), ENTR (IDA - coordination with Member States) EMPL (accessibility), SJ (legal matters), BUDG (resources). It will also include a representative of the web-masters community (EUROPA Forum).

The EUROPA II Steering Committee will lead and monitor the gradual implementation of the overall architecture and reference framework described in chapter 4 and will ensure that each key player contributes in time to the steps leading to the reference framework for e-Commission. The Committee will also ensure the follow-up of the EUROPA II roadmap, in particular the identification of priority sites to be migrated by 2002. Finally, it will supervise the work of the Editorial Committee and of the Infrastructure and Service Committee.

It will be the responsibility of the EUROPA II Steering Committee to assist the authorising officers in defining their budget needs for achieving the EUROPA II objectives and to seek improved co-ordination and use of resources funded by the various budget lines.

The EUROPA II Steering Committee will meet at least four times a year.

6.2. EUROPA II Editorial Committee

This Committee will bring together representatives in charge of Internet operations of PRESS (chair), SG, OPOCE, SDT, INFISO, MARKT, Central Library (EAC). It will also include the representatives of the webmasters community (EUROPA FORUM) and a representative of the Infrastructure and Services Committee. It will be open to other Departments leading major portal initiatives.

The Committee will (1) overview the regular up-dating of the Information Providers Guide (2) monitor the implementation of the common editorial, graphical and technical guidelines and the quality, architecture and content of the Commission's web-sites, (3) see that the thematic approach stemming from the Commission decisions in October 1999 is fully implemented by all Departments, (4) promote the emergence of portal sites integrating information by theme, by audience or by service, (5) gather and assess feedback from users. It will address its recommendations to the responsible departments.

The EUROPA II Editorial Committee will meet every month.

6.3. Infrastructure and Services Committee

The Committee will consist of ADMIN/DI (chair), OPOCE, PRESS, SG, SDT, INFISO, EUROSTAT, RELEX and a representative of the EUROPA Forum.

This Committee will define the technical strategy and associated web architecture for document preparation, dissemination, and publication and archiving, as well as exploitation of communication and transaction services based on Department end user needs. It will supervise their implementation based on standard product management procedures. It will update the technical guidelines of the Information Providers Guide. It will see that a balanced training programme accompanies the Internet policy of the Commission. The architecture and its implementation will be presented periodically for information to the relevant Commission and Interinstitutional bodies such as CTI (Comité Technique Informatique), EUROPA Forum, Comité Interinstitutionnel - Publications multimédia - outils et méthodes, ... and will be submitted to the EUROPA Steering Committee for approval.

The Infrastructure and Services Committee will meet at least four times a year.

6.4. EUROPA Forum

As a formal instance of EUROPA's management structure, it will (1) express its needs in terms of infrastructure, publishing tools, training strategy; (2) take part in the up-dating of the Information Providers Guide; (3) exchange best practices and organise workshops. Its members, formally nominated by their DG, will take care of the compliance of the web-documents produced within their DG with the editorial, technical and graphic rules of the Information Providers Guide.

The EUROPA Forum nominates its representatives in the above Committees and decides its working calendar.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

For the Commission to achieve a mature presence on the Internet through EUROPA II, meet the users' needs, and implement more efficient working processes exploiting modern technology, it is recommended:

- To encourage the development of a Commission-wide integrated information and communication strategy, in particular for its presence on the Internet and web publishing.
- To allow for a more flexible organisational structure in terms of departments, distribution of responsibilities and tasks, and communications preferences, while stimulating knowledge sharing and networking.
- To promote the "decompartmentalisation" and "debureaucratisation" of administrative culture, facilitating the information flows across Commission departments, and the incentives for a service approach both at management and operational levels.

The Commission is invited to:

1. Approve the EUROPA II roadmap as described in chapter 5, providing the Commission departments with a common reference architecture and timetable ;
2. Approve the reference organisational framework as described in chapter 6 providing stronger central backing (technology, new e-services, back office support) for actions to be taken by Commission Departments in the field of information, communication and transaction services ;
3. Approve the investments specified in the financial statement for the take-off of the EUROPA 2nd generation project;
4. Mandate DG PRESS and the EUROPA II management structure (cf. chapter 6) to stimulate the cross-departmental effort needed for the delivery of advanced web services to citizens and business, monitor budget allocation for implementing e-services and co-ordinate the implementation of the reference back office framework necessary to ensure an e-Commission advanced Internet presence;
5. Mandate ADMIN/DI to strengthen and adapt to technological change the platform (infrastructure, telecommunications, software, training, recruitment) upon which the Commission - and its Departments - will deliver the information, communication and transaction services to which it is committed in the context of e-Europe;
6. Mandate DG ADMIN and OPOCE, in conjunction with DG PRESS and DG INFSO :
 - (a) to organise adequate and timely training programmes for information specialists and web-masters in the field of electronic publishing, interactive communication and transaction services,
 - (b) to ensure (special competitions, A and B auxiliary contracts) the recruitment of qualified staff for electronic publishing, interactive communication and transaction services.
 - (c) to ensure that adequate training is provided to allow the transition from the present basic Internet presence of the Commission to an Advanced Internet Presence.
7. Mandate OPOCE to formulate and bring forward adequate budgetary proposals for 2003 and beyond to ensure the speedy and highest professional standards of implementation as outlined above, bearing in mind its special interinstitutional publishing role.
8. Mandate DG INFSO to move to the operational implementation and exploitation of the thematic Commission portal “e-Europe: An Information Society for All”, by the end of 2001 as described under chapter 2, and to spin off thereafter to the other Commission departments the portal design and implementation methodology, including for their interactive and service facilities and for their operational exploitation;
9. Mandate all Commission Departments to :

- (a) ensure a higher level of interactivity to support information, communication and transaction services, with enhanced reactivity to user needs and requests,
- (b) pay careful attention to the consistency and userfriendliness of web sites, as well as multilingual coverage and regular updating and archiving of their content, notably by the introduction and enhanced use of content management tools, to handle the growing quantity of information and content sources,
- (c) complete the thematic approach initiated in October 1999 and plan the steps needed for the introduction of portal sites by subject (policies) and by audience (ex. Media, Business, Citizens, ...),
- (d) review their internal processes in the fields of information, interactivity and transactions,
- (e) ensure that responsibility for policy formulation includes associated information and communication aspects,
- (f) ensure the migration of their existing web sites to the thematic approach and the implementation of new e-services,
- (g) identify the human and financial resources to develop and maintain their advanced multilingual Internet presence so as to publish, interact and transact online to the highest standards set by the leading world e-government administrations.

End of document

Annex: Financial statement