

## ROADMAP

Title of the initiative: **European Digital Agenda**  
Type of initiative (CWP/Catalogue/Comitology): CWP  
Lead DG/contact person/details: INFSO/  
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### Initial IA screening & planning of further work

#### **A. Context and problem definition**

(i) What is the political context of the initiative? (ii) How does this initiative relate to past and possible future initiatives, and to other EU policies?

The Digital Agenda is a flagship and first policy initiative to be launched under the new Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. Through the issues it addresses, the Digital Agenda is also closely linked to various other EU policies, such as the single market, consumer protection, research and innovation, industrial policy, regional and rural development, environmental sustainability, skills and culture, or healthcare. The European Digital Agenda is the European Commission's new strategy for using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to the benefit Europe's society and economy. The Digital Agenda outlines the vision, targets and policy measures for the next years.

What are the main problems identified?

More growth in the ICT industry and wider ICT take-up would boost Europe's economic recovery and long-term competitiveness. The internet empowers citizens by giving them access to information and new services.

However, obstacles such as low investment in network roll-out, a fragmented European online market, ill-adapted copyright legislation, lack of trust and interoperability, and a lack of digital skills prevent Europe from making the most of the opportunities offered by ICT.

Who is affected?

All stakeholders are affected: citizens, industry, public administrations.

(i) Is EU action justified on grounds of subsidiarity? (ii) Why can the objectives of the proposed action not be achieved sufficiently by Member States (necessity test)? (iii) As a result of this, can objectives be better achieved by action by the Community (test of EU Value Added)?

Currently, despite the global spread of the Internet, the online markets in the EU are still separated by artificial barriers. For instance, European consumers face a number of obstacles when shopping or accessing content online. The Digital Agenda addresses a number of areas in which policies are fragmented along national lines and a coordinated response at the EU level is needed to take better advantage of the EU's major economic asset - the 500 million strong consumer market.

#### **B. Objectives of EU initiative**

What are the main policy objectives?

At EU level, the Commission will work:

- To provide a stable legal framework that stimulates investments in an open and competitive high speed internet infrastructure and in related services;
- To develop an efficient spectrum policy;
- To facilitate the use of the EU's structural funds in pursuit of this agenda;

- To create a true single market for online content and services (i.e. borderless and safe EU web services and digital content markets, with high levels of trust and confidence, a balanced regulatory framework with clear rights regimes, the fostering of multi-territorial licences, adequate protection and remuneration for rights holders and active support for the digitisation of Europe's rich cultural heritage, and to shape the global governance of the internet;
- To reform the research and innovation funds and increase support in the field of ICTs so as to reinforce Europe's technology strength in key strategic fields and create the conditions for high growth SMEs to lead emerging markets and to stimulate ICT innovation across all business sectors;
- To promote internet access and take-up by all European citizens, especially through actions in support of digital literacy and accessibility.

At national level, Member States will need:

- To draw up operational high speed internet strategies, and target public funding, including structural funds, on areas not fully served by private investments;
- To establish a legal framework for co-ordinating public works to reduce costs of network rollout;
- To promote deployment and usage of modern accessible online services (e.g. e-government, online health, smart home, digital skills, security).

Do the objectives imply developing EU policy in new areas or in areas of strategic importance?

Due to the fast-changing nature of ICT and their disruptive impact worldwide, the Digital Agenda develops EU policy in an area which is still relatively new and constantly evolving – and which is of strategic importance to Europe's social development and economic competitiveness.

### **C. Options**

(i) What are the policy options? (ii) What legislative or 'soft law' instruments could be considered? (iii) Would any legislative initiatives go beyond routine up-date of existing legislation?

The Digital Agenda is a flagship initiative under the Europe 2020 strategy. As such, it is a substantial policy package with a targeted programme of measures including legal measures notably in the areas of: promoting broadband roll out and take-up; legal reforms to stimulate the digital single market; reinforcing digital citizenship through enhanced inter alia e-skills and ICT for Energy Efficiency; the clarification and better enforcement of consumer protection in online environments; working with MS to establish interoperable e-authentication to raise trust and security; stepping up and focusing ICT research in the EU; and legal measures to enhance the standardisation of ICT that is open and interoperable. Each individual action will individually undergo impact assessments and will each have their own policy options (hence at this stage this aspect is not further developed here). The Digital Agenda will go significantly beyond routine up-date of existing legislation.

Does the action proposed in the options cut across several policy areas or impact on action taken/planned by other Commission departments?

The Digital Agenda cuts across a range of policy areas such as the single market, consumer protection, research and innovation, industrial policy, regional and rural development, environmental sustainability, skills and culture, or healthcare.

Explain how the options respect the proportionality principle

All policy measures under the Digital Agenda will respect the proportionality principle. As a strategy document the EDA will be accompanied by a stream of implementing measures each of which will be accompanied by its specific impact assessment. The current set of themes are strongly supported by the results of an extensive consultation exercise conducted last year and are the outcome of significant background research that it is intended will be published alongside

the EDA Flagship (such as the DLA Piper review of the Community Acquis in the Digital Single Market and the Deloitte study on options for the Digital Agenda).

#### **D. Initial assessment of impacts**

What are the significant impacts likely to result from each policy option (cf. list of impacts in the Impact Assessment Guidelines pages 32-37), even if these impacts would materialise only after subsequent Commission initiatives?

Without a comprehensive strategy for the digital society and economy, a deepening of the problems outlined above (see point A) can be expected.

Full implementation of the Digital Agenda, on the other hand, is likely to contribute to greater empowerment of the users, enabling consumers to become informed, competent, creative and critical users of converging technologies. Increasing consumer demand will guarantee investors' return on investments in ICT infrastructure, products and services, which will translate into improving jobs and growth at the EU level. The Digital Agenda is a package of demand-side and supply-side measures that will help Europe to maintain its strong and competitive position on the global ICT market.

Could the options have impacts on the EU-Budget (above 5 Mio €) and/or should the IA also serve as the ex-ante evaluation, required by the Financial Regulation?

There are no budgetary implications at this stage, but specific implementing actions will certainly give rise to budgetary demands which will have to be assessed on their own merits as part of the impact assessment.

Could the options have significant impacts on (i) simplification, (ii) administrative burden or on (iii) relations with third countries?

Some of the actions proposed in the Digital Agenda may have an impact on simplification of administrative burden – that would be established in the course of future individual impact assessments.

#### **E. Planning of further impact assessment work**

When will the impact assessment work start? The follow up initiatives will be accompanied by the impact assessments where appropriate.

(i) What information and data are already available? (ii) Will this impact assessment build on already existing impact assessment work or evaluations carried out? (iii) What further information needs to be gathered? (iv) How will this be done (e.g. internally or by an external contractor) and by when? (v) What type and level of analysis will be carried out (cf. principle of proportionate analysis)?

The Digital Agenda has been preceded by extensive studies on the thematic areas as well as an overall study looking at possible policy options.

Which stakeholders & experts have been/will be consulted, how and at what stage?

There were extensive stakeholder consultations in 2009 – an open online public consultation, a public hearing, as well as internal and external workshops.