

Draft joint press release

**Euro-Mediterranean Ministers convene in Cairo to discuss
“Building an Enabling Environment for the EUROMED Information Society”**

Cairo, 25 February 2008

EUROMED partnership countries will gather in Cairo on 26-27 February 2008 for the EUROMED Ministerial Conference on the Information Society entitled “*Building an Enabling Environment for the EUROMED Information Society*”, held under the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the EU in cooperation with the European Commission and hosted by Egypt’s Ministry of Communications and Information Technology. Bringing together over 250 participants, it is aimed at building an effective EUROMED Information Society based on win-win partnerships and public-private investments and encouraging improved dialogue between EUROMED partnership countries.

During the two-day event, the ministers are expected to discuss matters related to the future of the EUROMED Information Society with a view to shaping a vision as well as the future EUROMED cooperation scheme. The aim is to give a new impulse to the EUROMED Dialogue on the Information Society through action on several fronts:

- Reinforcing the work of the EUROMED Forum on the Information Society as a crucial tool in enhancing and strengthening cooperation between EUROMED partners;
- Carrying out a mapping exercise to match existing programmes against the priorities identified for the Euro-Mediterranean region.

The changing dynamics of the EUROMED Information Society in light of recent technological and business realities related to convergence, creativity and cyber security will be discussed. Ministers will present their views on issues such as an enabling environment for foreign direct investment (FDI) in the EUROMED region, with investments flowing from north to south and vice versa. They will also discuss the scarcity of skilled ICT work force and the socio-economic impact of “smart sourcing” in the EUROMED region.

Participants will also highlight mechanisms for cooperation in the EUROMED region in regulatory issues, connectivity, research and ICT for development, including multilingual e-content, e-learning and e-government. Recommendations on improving cooperation and information sharing will be adopted, to be followed up by the Working Party on the Information Society.

In parallel time with this conference, Egypt's largest annual ICT exhibition and forum, “Cairo ICT 2008” will take place for the 12th round. Participants in the Ministerial Conference will have the opportunity to visit the exhibition venue and network with the international ICT business community present.

The Ministerial Conference on the Information Society is being realised within the framework of the Barcelona process. It builds upon the EUROMED Ministerial Conference held in Ireland in April 2005 and the two meetings of the EUROMED Forum on the Information Society held in Brussels in April 2006 and October 2007.

For more information, contact
Media Relations Dept. Ministry of CIT, Egypt: mfayez@mcit.gov.eg

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