



"To get the full benefits of information and communication technologies, Member States need more ambitious plans to exploit them. Current plans still neglect emerging engines of growth such as the convergence of digital networks".

Viviane Reding Commissioner for
Information Society and Media



A summary of the first year's results

The Single European Information Space

Achievements May 2005/2006:

Review of the EU rules for electronic communications: the Commission is reviewing these rules with a view to strengthening investment through infrastructure-based competition, promoting innovation through openness of the rules for new technologies, and completing the single market, by making the application of EU rules more consistent across the 25 Member States. [eCommunications framework](#)

Broadband: broadband take-up has grown fast in Europe in the past three years. There are almost 60 million broadband lines in Europe today. The EU penetration rate has reached 13% of population or roughly 25% of households. [MEMO/06/132](#)

Spectrum strategy: a series of actions to launch a general reform of spectrum management and specific harmonisation measures were carried out in 2005 to put spectrum to its most promising uses throughout the EU, e.g. the analogue to digital TV switchover will free up a substantial "spectrum dividend" which could be made available for new pan-European services. [MEMO/05/345](#)

Mobile 'roaming': the cost of using a mobile phone abroad is too high. In October 2005, the Commission sought to improve the transparency of international mobile "roaming" charges, by posting sample ones on a web site for comparison. This has brought little improvement and the Commission plans to table an EU regulation in July 2006 to bring these charges down. [MEMO/06/144](#)

TV without Frontiers: at the end of 2005, the Commission tabled a proposal to update the EU's TVWF Directive This aims to reduce the

regulatory burden on Europe's suppliers of TV and TV-like services and to give them more flexibility for financing audiovisual content via new forms of advertising. It would create a level playing field for all suppliers of these services, irrespective of the technology used to deliver them. The Commission also proposes replacing disparate national rules for protection of minors, and against surreptitious advertising and incitement to racial hatred; with a basic, EU-wide minimum standard of protection for "on demand" audiovisual services. This update of the 1989 Directive should accelerate the emergence of a seamless single market for TV and TV-like services and promote a strong and creative European digital content industry. [MEMO/05/475](#)

Film Online: launched by the Commission at the 2005 Cannes film festival, is an initiative that aims to promote forms of online distribution. CEOs from telecoms, internet and audiovisual content firms meeting this year's Cannes film festival on 23 May will endorse a "European Charter for the Development and the Take-up of Film Online".

Content Online: digital convergence offers many benefits to European citizens, from easier access to a greater variety of information to a greater capacity to create and distribute their own digital content. The Commission plans to present its proposal at the end of 2006 to extend the work of the Film Online initiative to cover online content.

.eu: this new top level domain, which enables Europe's businesses, citizens and public bodies to project a European identity protected by EU rules, was launched on 7 December 2005 opened up to all citizens from 7 April 2006. It proved a runaway success, as over 1.5 million .eu names were registered in the week following 7 April. [MEMO/06/159](#)

Innovation and investment in ICT research

Achievements May 2005/2006:

Radio Frequency Identification devices, which will soon replace bar codes in your supermarket, offer tremendous opportunities for business and society. But their power to report their location, identity and history also raises serious concerns about personal privacy and security, as well as technical interoperability and international compatibility. To address these concerns, the European Commission is running a comprehensive public consultation until June 2006 and plans to present proposals at the end of the year. [MEMO/06/112](#)

European Technology Platforms: these help industrial and academic research communities in specific technology fields to co-ordinate their research and tailor it to a common "*strategic research agenda*" which sets out R&D goals, time frames and action plans for technological advances that are relevant to industry and society. SRAs aim to mobilise a critical mass of national and European public and private resources in order to overcome barriers to the development, deployment and use of new technologies. Nine ETPs have been launched in the following ICT areas: nanoelectronics (ENIAC), embedded systems (ARTEMIS), mobile and wireless communications (eMobility), networked electronic media (NEM), networked software and services (NESSI), robotics (EUROP), photonics (PHOTONICS21) satellite communications (ISI) and smart systems integration (EPoSS). [MEMO/05/354](#)

Pre-commercial public procurement: Member States have begun discussing ways to use pre-commercial public procurement of innovation at EU level to promote research and innovation in ICT. [IP/06/373](#)

Inclusion, better public services and quality of life

Achievements May 2005/2006:

eInclusion: in 2005 and early 2006, major progress was made with the communications on 'Bridging the broadband gap' and on 'eAccessibility'. A ministerial conference on 'eInclusion' in Riga (Latvia) in June 2006 will be the starting point for work on an EU initiative on eInclusion for 2008, with the aim to make the benefits of information and communication technology available to all EU citizens.

eGovernment: an eGovernment action plan tabled by the Commission in April 2006 addresses five priority areas for 2010 and underlines its commitment to delivering tangible benefits to all Europeans in the following areas:

- no citizen left behind (access to digital technologies)
- raising efficiency (public services)
- e-Procurement (cross-border public procurement projects)
- safe access to services EU wide (electronic ID), and
- strengthening democratic decision-making (ICT for more effective public participation in policy making). [MEMO/06/171](#)

eHealth: progress in implementing the EU's eHealth Action Plan of 2004 is helping to accelerate the reform of health systems. By end 2005 several EU Member States had announced eHealth roadmaps including major eHealth applications and services deployment. [IP/05/583](#)

i2010 Flagship 'Intelligent cars': intelligent cars can help solve our key road transport problems: safety, traffic congestion and energy consumption. The Commission's "intelligent car" initiative aims to build stakeholder support for making ICTs an integral part of all vehicles built in Europe. For example, a European Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in December 2005 to ensure that an automatic in-vehicle emergency call service (eCall) system can work anywhere in Europe. [MEMO/06/86](#)

i2010 flagship 'European Digital Library': the Commission's plan to promote digital access to Europe's heritage is rapidly taking shape. At least six million books, documents and other cultural works will be made available over the next five years to anyone with a European Digital Library web connection. To this end, the Commission is bringing together stakeholders from industry and cultural institutions to address issues such as public-private collaboration for digitisation and copyrights. [MEMO/06/102](#)

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